

COLUMBIA LIBRARIES OFFSITE  
RESTRICTED



CR00192082







THE WILL TO BELIEVE  
AS A BASIS FOR THE  
DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH  
A CRITICAL STUDY

BY  
ETTIE STETTMEIER, PH.D.

ARCHIVES OF PHILOSOPHY

EDITED BY  
FREDERICK J. E. WOODBRIDGE

No. 2, DECEMBER, 1907

NEW YORK  
THE SCIENCE PRESS

1907

## ARCHIVES OF PSYCHOLOGY

Editorial communications should be addressed to PROFESSOR R. S. WOODWORTH, Columbia University, New York City.

Subscriptions and advertisements should be sent to ARCHIVES OF PSYCHOLOGY, Sub-Station 84, New York City. The subscription price is five dollars a volume, containing between six and seven hundred pages. The numbers are as follows :

1. The Psychology of Mentally Deficient Children : NAOMI NORSWORTHY. \$1.00.
2. On the Functions of the Cerebrum : The Frontal Lobes. SHEPHERD IVORY FRANZ. 50c.
3. Empirical Studies in the Theory of Measurements : EDWARD L. THORNDIKE. 50 cents.
4. Rhythm as a Distinguishing Characteristic of Prose Style : ABRAM LIPSKY. 50 cents.
5. The Field of Distinct Vision : W. C. RUEDIGER. 70 cents.
6. The Influence of Bodily Position on Mental Activities : ELMER E. JONES. 50 cents.
7. A Statistical Study of Literary Merit : FREDERICK LYMAN WELLS. 30 cents.
8. The Relation between the Magnitude of the Stimulus and the time of Reaction : SVEN FROEBERG. *In press.*
9. The Perceptual Factors in Reading : FRANCIS MARION HAMILTON. *In press.*

This series is a continuation of the psychological part of the *Archives of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, of which one volume was issued, which may be had at the price of \$5.00, and which contains the following numbers :

- Measurements of Twins : EDWARD L. THORNDIKE. 50 cents.  
Avenarius and the Standpoint of Pure Experience : WENDELL T. BUSH. 75 cents.  
The Psychology of Association : FELIX ARNOLD. 50 cents.  
The Psychology of Reading : WALTER FENNO DEARBORN. \$1.00.  
The Measurement of Variable Quantities : FRANZ BOAS. 50 cents.  
Linguistic Lapses : FREDERIC LYMAN WELLS. \$1.00.  
The Diurnal Course of Efficiency : HOWARD D. MARSH. 90 cents.  
The Time of Perception as a Measure of Differences in Sensations : VIVIAN ALLEN CHARLES HENMON. 60 cents.

---

## LIBRARY OF PHILOSOPHY

### PSYCHOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS

---

EDITED BY PROFESSOR J. MCKEEN CATTELL

- Theory of Mental and Social Measurements : EDWARD L. THORNDIKE. \$1.50.  
Science and Hypothesis : HENRI POINCARÉ. Translated by GEORGE BRUCE HALSTED, with an Introduction by JOSIAH ROYCE. \$1.50.

---

## THE SCIENCE PRESS,

Sub-Station 84, New York City.

THE WILL TO BELIEVE  
AS A BASIS FOR THE  
DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH  
A CRITICAL STUDY

BY  
ETTIE STETTMEIER, PH.D.

ARCHIVES OF PHILOSOPHY

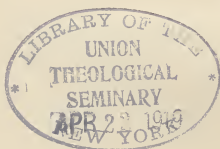
EDITED BY  
FREDERICK J. E. WOODBRIDGE

NO. 2, DECEMBER, 1907

NEW YORK  
THE SCIENCE PRESS

1907

PRESS OF  
THE NEW ERA PRINTING COMPANY  
LANCASTER, PA.





188  
S 841

## CONTENTS

Prefatory note .....	v
----------------------	---

### INTRODUCTION

James's general standpoint—Voluntarism—James's historical place—The task .....	1
--	---

### PART I

#### EXPOSITION OF JAMES'S DOCTRINE

Introduction: Plan of exposition .....	5
--	---

#### CHAPTER I

##### THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH

James's <i>Weltanschauung</i> —The place of religious faith in James's philosophy—The content and significance of the religious hypothesis .....	6
--	---

#### CHAPTER II

##### THE BASIS OF THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH: THE THEORY OF JUDGMENT

Belief, its nature and the conditions which give rise to it—Belief as will—The freedom of will and of belief—Summary .....	19
--	----

### PART II

#### CRITICISM OF JAMES'S DOCTRINE

Introduction: The method of the critique—The charge of subjectivism ....	31
--	----

#### CHAPTER III

##### JAMES'S DOCTRINE AS A DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH AT THE COST OF PURE KNOWLEDGE

The relation of faith to knowledge and its significance for the overthrow of intellectualism—Paulsen's contribution to the solution of the problem of the relation between intellect and will—Criticism of Paulsen's contribution to the problem—James's contribution to the solution of the problem of the relation between intellect and will—James's solution of the problem on the basis of free belief—The result of James's solution and the dilemma in which it leaves us .....	34
--	----

#### CHAPTER IV

##### JAMES'S DOCTRINE AS A DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH AT THE COST OF OBJECTIVE REALITY

The epistemological presuppositions for the subjectivism of a theory of free belief—The epistemological presuppositions of the 'psychology	
--	--

of belief'—The individuality of James's theory of judgment—The epistemological presuppositions of James's theory of judgment—The importance of these facts for James's solution of the problem of the overthrow of intellectualism—Positive evaluation of the will to believe as a basis for the defense of religious faith, and summary ..... 55

## CHAPTER V

### THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF AS A VICIOUS CIRCLE

The freedom of belief as a justifiable free postulate—The problematic attitude in its relation to the defense of religious belief—The basic presupposition of James's justification of freedom ..... 78

## CONCLUSION

James's relation to the other representatives of voluntarism—Evaluation of his doctrines as a contribution to the voluntaristic interpretation of the world ..... 93

## PREFATORY NOTE

THIS critique was written a few years ago, at a time when no one term—neither pragmatism nor humanism—had been generally adopted as a label for Professor James's philosophic standpoint. Pragmatism was associated more particularly with the work of Professor Dewey and his school, humanism with that of Dr. Schiller. The term 'voluntarism,' however, was established by usage in German philosophic literature as a designation for that mode of philosophizing which attempts to construct a *Weltanschauung* upon the fundamental fact of the primacy of the will in both the practical and the theoretical spheres. Obviously the term voluntarism is sufficiently vague to include many divergent theories of knowledge and reality, yet sufficiently definite to draw a sharp line between its own philosophical property and that of intellectualism, whether rationalistic or empirical.

Now the following pages have to do mainly with James's religious philosophy and with his theory of knowledge in so far as they afford a foundation for the structure of his defense of religious faith. In criticizing his doctrine I have adopted two methods of discussion; first, its comparison with related doctrines for the purpose of bringing into relief its individual character, and second, an examination into its coherence for the purpose of exhibiting its utter inherent inconsistency.

For this latter mode of criticism it may be considered immaterial with what name the philosophy under discussion be etiquetted; the criticism is directed against individual philosophical conclusions, be the method by which they are reached or the general standpoint from which the thinker views his field pragmatic, humanistic or voluntaristic: the method or point of view itself is not involved in the criticism excepting in so far as we may suppose it to be responsible for the results reached. The first manner of treatment, however—that of comparison—contains the explanation for our application of the label of voluntarism to James's philosophy. For the closest relatives of James's doctrine—both epistemological and *religions-philosophisch*—have seemed to me to be those theories which have designated themselves and have been designated in philosophical literature as 'voluntarism.' Whether this incorporation of James's doctrine into the family of voluntaristic philosophies, rather than into the pragmatic family or any other, be justified or not the

following pages will show; the propriety of such a proceeding can not be assailed if we find that without doing violence to the facts we thereby gain insight at once more comprehensive and more definite into that body of James's doctrine which, starting from the immediate experience of simple affirmation, finds in the fact that simple affirmation feels like will, the basis for an ultimate proclamation of the right to believe whatever lies in the line of one's needs.

I wish to add another word in justification of my phraseology. In a recent public utterance<sup>1</sup> Professor James repudiated the term 'The Will to Believe' as a title for his collection of essays published in 1898 and suggested the title 'The Right to Believe' as more representative of their teaching.

Undoubtedly the two phrases are conceptually distinct on the face of them; but just as undoubtedly, as the following critique will, I hope, show, the 'right to believe' in James's usage means the right to choose a belief or to will to believe. In a word, the title 'The Right to Believe' replaces the title 'The Will to Believe' by including it: for conceptually it is nothing but a shorthand for 'The Right to Will to Believe.'

<sup>1</sup> In the course of a series of lectures on pragmatism delivered at Columbia University during February, 1907.

# THE WILL TO BELIEVE AS A BASIS FOR THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH

## INTRODUCTION

THE doctrine which is to be treated in these pages is, in the broadest sense of the terms, a theory of the freedom of judgment. As the title indicates, this theory is to be criticized not only for its intrinsic validity, but also, and more especially, in its character as a foundation for the defense of religious belief.

Professor William James has been the first to give this character to a psychological theory of judgment: he first has advanced an exhaustive theory of belief, relating it to other trains of thought in order to draw its implications into a conclusion which virtually amounts to a justification of religious faith. It is his doctrine, therefore, which will form the center of our discussion.

The general movement in which Professor James's doctrine may be included is known to the philosophy of the day as 'voluntarism'; a movement of thought which seems to promise deliverance from the narrow confines of the intellectualistic view of the world, whether its final wisdom is embodied in empirical or in rationalistic systems. Every attempt at solving philosophical problems which seems to lie in this direction is therefore hailed with expectancy and is welcomed as having special claims to attention. It is in this spirit that Professor James's contribution to the voluntaristic explanation of the world has been received. So we find a recent writer, in an answer to James,<sup>1</sup> placing his doctrine at the terminal point of a line whose direction is indicated by the names of Kant, Fichte, Lotze, Sigwart, Paulsen, Jevons and Mr. Balfour, and whose trend is characterized by the assertion of the 'supremacy of the will.' In James's doctrine he welcomes the first perfectly definite expression of the independence of this supreme will. For, in distinction from his predecessors who still attempted to a greater or less degree to establish the supremacy of the will, with the consent of the reason, James takes his stand on 'sheer volition.' He vigorously preaches the 'liberty of believing,' 'the lawfulness of voluntarily adopted faith,' 'the right to adopt a believing attitude in religious matters in spite of the fact that our merely logical intellect may not have been coerced.' In

<sup>1</sup> D. S. Miller, 'The Will to Believe and the Duty to Doubt,' *International Journal of Ethics*, January, 1899.

short, James is here conceived as bringing into explicit terms the implications of the voluntaristic interpretation of the world.

Paulsen, too, seeks an historical place for James, and finds it—in his own immediate neighborhood! In the introduction to the German translation of James's essays, he writes: "Professor James belongs to a movement indicated by the names of Hume, Kant, Fichte and Carlyle: on a positivistic foundation, an idealistic philosophy with energistic tendency. The will determines life, it is its elementary right; therefore it surely has the right to influence thought as well, not, to be sure, in the determination of single facts: here the intellect ought to judge solely according to the facts themselves; but rather in the conception and interpretation of reality as a whole."<sup>1</sup> In what manner James's standpoint thus interpreted is related to that of Kant, we learn from Paulsen in the conclusion of his 'Kant.'<sup>2</sup> It is here stated that one of Kant's most valuable and lasting contributions to philosophy is contained in his doctrine of the relation between 'knowledge' and 'faith.' Knowledge is a matter of the intellect, and the intellect "is perfectly free to examine critically all the facts of the spiritual and the historical worlds, and to explain them causally on the assumption of strict determinism. . . . Scientific research is the only means for attaining truth in questions of historical facts." However, this scientific knowledge is limited both empirically and transcendently. Empirically, because it can never exhaust the infinite world of experience, and transcendently, because even if the empirical world were fully explained we should be in possession of 'an accidental view of reality only, a projection of things on our senses': the intelligible world would still be an impassable barrier to scientific knowledge. "Only an intellect that creates things—an '*intellectus archetypus*'—knows them as they really are: an intellect to which they are presented through the medium of the senses can not transcend the knowledge of their external nature only. Hence the non-phenomenal transcendental world is matter for faith; the interpretation of the meaning of the sensible world from the point of view of the intelligible is the task of faith, and results in a metaphysic. This faith is a practical attitude springing from the volitional side of human nature, and therefore not subject to impugment on the part of the intellect." Kant's second great merit lies, according to Paulsen, in the fact that he first gave the will its rightful place in the general scheme of

<sup>1</sup> James, 'Der Wille zum Glauben und andere populärphilosophische Essays. Uebersetzt von Dr. Th. Lorenz,' Stuttgart, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> F. Paulsen, 'Immanuel Kant, sein Leben und seine Lehre,' pp. 393-397, Stuttgart, 1899.

things, by means of a chain of thought intimately related to the one just presented. On the will and not on the intellect depend, first, a man's value as a complete human being, and secondly, his *Weltanschauung*. This latter fact forms the proper foundation for a correct valuation of the validity and of the certitude of our truths. "Moral certitude is the final test of all certitude. The ultimate and most profound truths, the truths by which and for which man lives and dies, are not grounded in the intellect; they spring from the heart of man—from his will."<sup>1</sup> Every one makes assumptions and holds convictions which he can not prove, but which, though they have no logical certitude, have the highest moral certitude, inasmuch as they are the very conditions of life and of activity. Our belief in humanity, in progress and in the victory of the true and the good, is a conviction of this kind, as is also our religious belief.

According to Paulsen, now, James's historical importance lies in the fact that his doctrine is an amplification of this Kantian thought, in that he shows how science itself is based on what is a mere assumption, the possibility and the validity of knowledge or truth; and that if science then proceeds to identify this absolute knowledge with demonstrable knowledge and to reject all divergent conceptions of knowledge as 'unjustifiable assumptions,' she obviously proceeds in a totally arbitrary, dogmatic and inconsistent manner.<sup>2</sup> In conclusion Paulsen refers to his own similar standpoint as set forth in his 'Einleitung in die Philosophie,' a standpoint to be considered at length later on in these pages.

On the question of the propriety of incorporating James into the Kant-Fichte movement of philosophy, judgment must be reserved until we shall have reached critical conclusions. That such an interpretation of his doctrine is the obvious one, and that a special dignity and importance are conferred on James by this interpretation, are patent.

We have to do, then, not with an isolated theory, but with one which has been related to the most significant tendencies in modern thought, and whose critique involves a consideration of the entire voluntaristic movement; more especially so because, as we shall see, James's doctrine contains suggestions of almost every variety of voluntarism.

Our task, then, is to present James's doctrine, and after having shown what it professes, to subject it to a criticism which will enable us to judge both of its intrinsic validity and of its value as a contribution toward the voluntaristic explanation of the world.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 397-399.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 398 and foot-note.





## PART I

### EXPOSITION OF JAMES'S DOCTRINE

A COHERENT and connected presentation of James's theories must necessarily be more or less of a construction, for James's own work is not systematic.<sup>1</sup> Out of an abundance of demonstrations and expositions a logical argument must be extricated; a task rendered the more difficult by the fact that conflicting statements may not be ignored, as inconsistency is sometimes as essential to the nature of a theory as consistency.

The presentation of this doctrine falls naturally, as the title indicates, into two parts. First, the theory of judgment or belief, which forms the basis for the defense of religious belief; and secondly, the defense itself, as it rises upon the basis of this theory.<sup>2</sup> In concordance with the author's own thought process, we shall first present the significance and meaning of religious faith in his *Weltanschauung*; then, the justification it receives on the grounds of a psychological theory of judgment; and lastly, the theory of judgment itself.

<sup>1</sup> This remark is not made in a critical spirit, as the essays do not pretend to be systematic. I merely wish to point out that a systematic presentation of a work which has no systematic foundation given it by its author, is bound to be an interpretation in that it is forced to select its essential points independently.

<sup>2</sup> In a general way it may be said that the theory of judgment is found in James's 'The Principles of Psychology,' New York, 1893; and his defense of religious belief in his works 'The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy,' New York, London and Bombay, 1898; and 'The Varieties of Religious Experience,' New York, London and Bombay, 1903.

## CHAPTER I

### THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH

James's *Weltanschauung*—The place of religious faith in James's philosophy—The content and significance of the religious hypothesis.

JAMES's general philosophical standpoint is most clearly outlined in his essay 'The Sentiment of Rationality.'<sup>1</sup> Philosophy is man's attempt to rationalize the world, and the mark whereby he knows whether he has reached his goal is a subjective one: a feeling of 'ease, peace, rest.' This feeling of rationality is, to be sure, negative rather than positive; it is constituted by the absence of any feeling of irrationality. Just as unobstructed respiration is accompanied by no especial feeling of pleasure, whereas obstructed respiration produces intense pain, so any 'fluent course of thought awakens but little feeling'; when the movement is impeded, however, a feeling of distress results. "This feeling of the sufficiency of the present moment, of its absoluteness,—this absence of all need to explain it, account for it, or justify it,—is what I call the Sentiment of Rationality. As soon, in short, as we are enabled from any cause whatever to think with perfect fluency, the thing we think of seems to us *pro tanto* rational."

In a theoretical way this fluency—this sentiment of rationality—can not be obtained unless two demands have been satisfied: the theoretical passion or need for simplification of the manifold, which is brought about by generalization, and the sister passion for distinguishing, in order to gain clearness in regard to the unique and particular.

A mediation between these two syntheses of reality, diversity and unity, is the aim of philosophic unification; the first step thereto is the classification of things into extensive 'kinds'; and classification of their relations and conduct into extensive 'laws' is the last step.<sup>2</sup> But this unification is obviously only an abstraction, for it regards things from a limited point of view only, and can never really substitute the concrete manifold. In other words, the real essence of things can never be determined by theoretical philosophy—only different essences; and concepts, kinds, etc., are

<sup>1</sup> 'The Will to Believe,' p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67 ff.

teleological instruments created in the interests of a definite purpose. Now this interest in theoretical rationality is, to be sure, an invincible human impulse, but it is, after all, but one of many. And even if its goal were attained and the world were conceived simply, not so very much would have been gained after all. The ultimate question expressed by 'Why?' which is forced upon us by the notion of non-entity, would still be unanswered.

A wholly rational theoretical world-conception can not be attained, then; intellectual activity meets with an insurmountable obstacle and is checked. The question to arise, then, is this: Can the stream of theoretical contemplation be diverted into the practical sphere; and if so, 'what conception of the universe will awaken active impulses capable of effecting this diversion' and giving back to the mind the free motion which is the mark of true rationality? It is possible and conceivable now that different systems of philosophy should be equally satisfying to our purely theoretical needs—in this case, too, the theories must be submitted to the will side of our nature, and the one most suited to its needs will be pronounced the more rational. The tests of this practical rationality are the following: The conception or system must in the first place '*in a general way at least, banish uncertainty from the future.*' For this reason philosophies that explain the world *per substantium* have always been popular and satisfying. In the second place, and this is the essential test, the philosophy must define the future '*congruously with our spontaneous powers,*' it must provide our active propensities and desires with an object to press against, and our feelings with a meaning and with relevancy to universal affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Of the relationship between practical and theoretical rationality we learn more in the 'Dilemma of Determinism.'<sup>2</sup> Philosophy as well as empirical science grows out of man's invincible impulse to rationalize the world of experience. So far the world has lent itself to the transformation, but to what extent it will continue to do so, no one can foretell: the trial must be made again and again, and conceptions of moral rationality as well as of mechanical and logical rationality must be applied for this end. The two kinds of rationality are coordinate; that which does not satisfy moral needs may be doubted or thrown overboard with the same justification as that which contradicts the logical intellect. Rationality yields subjective satisfaction only: theoretical demands—such as causality and uni-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82 ff.

<sup>2</sup> 'Will to Believe,' p. 146 ff. James cites Sigwart, 'Logik,' Vol. II., p. 382, on this occasion.

formity—being quite as ‘subjective and emotional’ as moral demands. And, indeed, the study of physiology and psychology makes us realize, not only that the cognitive faculty of theorizing—the intellect itself—is nothing other than a means to action, but further, that its transformation of the world of perceptual experience is effected in the interest of the volitional side of human nature.<sup>1</sup> It would thus seem that theoretical knowledge is of a secondary nature, is but one means toward rationality among many, and is, after all, but a subjective expression of will. We *want* a rational world, because we must stand in relation to it. In this sense we accept the postulates of science, uniformity and causality, to construct on them our body of knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, in ‘The Varieties of Religious Experience’ we read that theoretical rationality can be gauged and tested by practical results only. The significance of any thought lies in its consequences, its influences on conduct and practise.<sup>3</sup> The conclusion to be drawn for the relation of practical and theoretical rationality from this ‘pragmatic’ point of view, is that ‘the true is what works well, even though the qualification “on the whole” may always have to be added.’<sup>4</sup> The uses to which a thing may be put are thus the best arguments that truth is in it. A thing is real in so far as it shows real effects. It is not sufficiently recognized how exclusively the intellect is built up on practical interests, although the doctrine of evolution is to-day contributing much toward the realization that knowledge remains imperfect until it issues in action. The cardinal question in reference to a newly presented object of consciousness is not the theoretical question, ‘What is it?’ but the practical question, ‘What shall I do with it?’ And the same is true when the object consists of the cosmos in its totality. In regard to it, too, I must react in some way or other, and if a philosophy demands that my attitude be of a definite character, it has acknowledged that the nature of the cosmos is known. And, indeed, all great periods of revival of the human spirit have been characterized by the propagation of the text, “The inmost nature of reality is congenial to *powers* which you possess.”<sup>5</sup> Now, one of the most important powers we possess as willing and acting beings is that of ‘faith.’

<sup>1</sup> ‘Reflex Action and Theism,’ *ibid.*, p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124–131. James again cites Sigwart, ‘Logik,’ Vol. II., p. 25, where the primacy of the will is advocated in the sphere of logic even, for the reason that the processes of thought with which logic has to do rest upon a ‘will for truth.’

<sup>3</sup> ‘The Varieties of Religious Experience,’ New York, London and Bombay, 1903, p. 444 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 458.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Will to Believe,’ p. 84 ff.

“Faith means belief in something concerning which doubt is still theoretically possible; and as the test of belief is willingness to act, one may say that faith is the readiness to act in a cause the prosperous issue of which is not certified to us in advance.”<sup>1</sup> The necessity and justification of this faith as a mental attitude is affirmed, as was shown, even by scientific philosophers, but, by a perfectly arbitrary procedure, only for the case of a single doctrine, that of the uniformity of the course of nature—a postulate pursued, as we know, in the interests of cognition and of action. In just the same manner, however, a religious dogma is postulated and accepted in the interests of our volitional nature. Faith has meaning as an hypothesis with which one operates, and the differences in hypotheses are only these, that some may be proved or disproved in five minutes, and that others defy centuries of research; that some are sufficiently unimportant to permit us to delay our decision until perceptual verification can be obtained, while others are so momentous that we are forced to come to an immediate decision. To act upon unverified hypotheses is, to be sure, a risk, because the results of the action alone can show whether the faith in the hypothesis was justified: whether I was right. But, in the case of religious faith it is a risk in which nothing can be lost and everything may be gained; for in adopting the religious hypothesis and with it the risk, a man feels something like this: “I *expect* then to triumph with tenfold glory; but if it should turn out, as indeed it may, that I have spent my days in a fool’s paradise, why, better have been the dupe of *such* a dreamland than the cunning reader of a world like that which then beyond all doubt unmasks itself to view.”

To sum up in a word: It would seem that, according to James, faith, belonging to the practical side of human nature, is both the root and the crown of all knowledge of the world. In the broadest sense, it is basic, because theoretical knowledge or cognition—rationalization of the world—arises out of practical interests and has for its goal practical interests, although not always conscious of it; in a word, cognition is but a means to action. In a narrower sense, faith is at the basis of knowledge, inasmuch as faith, one of our strongest practical powers, is constantly presupposed by scientific knowledge, for even as purely theoretical intellects we are constantly working with unproved postulates and hypotheses, toward which we assume a believing attitude. At the goal of the process of knowledge faith again comes to its rights, inasmuch as the theorizing faculty finds itself unable to perform its self-imposed task—the rationalization of the world—and the volitional and practical facul-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

ties must therefore attempt it. And in a narrower sense again; inasmuch as man is constantly confronted with hypotheses which form real options, that is, which must be decided immediately because they must immediately be acted on, and which, nevertheless, can not be decided on purely intellectual grounds, here faith not only *may*, but *must* intervene and pronounce its yea or nay over against a possible problematic attitude.

If we seek to determine the place for religious faith in James's philosophy, it is with this latter class of hypotheses that we must occupy ourselves. We find this class treated at length in the essay 'The Will to Believe.' Here James first defines his conception of a true option.<sup>1</sup> He gives the name of hypothesis to anything that is proposed to one's belief, and considers it 'live' if it appeals to one as a possibility—if a tendency to believe in it exists. An option, now, is defined as the decision between two hypotheses. "Options may be of several kinds. They may be, 1, *living* or *dead*; 2, *forced* or *avoidable*; 3, *momentous* or *trivial*; . . . a *genuine* option . . . is of the forced, living, and momentous kind." An option is living if it appeals, even slightly, to our belief; it is unavoidable if it forms a logical dilemma and a choice must be made; if, for instance, I am told, "Accept this truth, or go without it," for in such a case I am obliged to take sides. And finally, it is obvious that an option may be more or less momentous in its consequences. With a genuine option of this sort, then, we are concerned when we seek for the place of religious faith in James's *Weltanschauung*. Before demonstrating this, however, James cursorily considers the rôle that belief, conceived as an expression of will, *actually* plays in the formation of human opinion. He shows how will in general, that is to say, not only deliberate volitions, but all factors of beliefs, such as fear, hope, passion, prejudice of caste and sect, have been powerful collaborators to the sum total of our opinions. We believe, but why? We hardly know. As an example of this kind of belief James cites our belief in truth itself. He says: "That there is a truth, and that our minds and it are made for each other,—what is it but a passionate affirmation of desire, in which our social system backs us up? We want to have a truth; we want to believe that our experiments and studies and discussions must put us in a continually better and better position towards it; and on this line we agree to fight out our thinking lives. But if a pyrrhonistic skeptic asks us *how we know* all this, can our logic find a reply? No! certainly it can not. It is just one volition against another,—we willing to go in for life upon a trust or assumption which he, for his part, does not care to make."

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

This case, although cited as an example of the unconscious non-intellectual influences on opinions and knowledge, leads us into the domain of deliberate volitional decisions—into the field of options. For here, where we consciously face a dilemma and must come to a decision for or against an hypothesis, the deliberate volitional act is called for. Here faith may decide; that is, the volitional side of one's nature may express itself through faith, one may believe what one will.

Nay, more: "*Our passionate nature not only lawfully may, but must, decide an option between propositions, whenever it is a genuine option that can not by its nature be decided on intellectual grounds; for to say, under the circumstances, 'Do not decide, but leave the question open,' is itself a passionate decision,—just like deciding yes or no,—and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth.*"

This thesis, James continues, is based on two general presuppositions. Epistemologically it is based on the foundation of empirical dogmatism, a standpoint which is dogmatic in that it acknowledges truth and our ability to attain to it; empirical, in that it denies that we can always know *when* we have attained the truth. For as empiricists we are forced to admit that every one of our convictions may be reversed, and that the sole criterion of the truth of an hypothesis is the confirmation it receives from the 'total drift of thinking.'<sup>1</sup> Now it is this standpoint on which the thesis cited above rests; for, inasmuch as we are not in possession of infallible intellects with objective certitude, and inasmuch as no bell rings in us when we have attained the truth, we can not feel bound to wait for such a bell to ring, we are not bound in loyalty to any infallible organ. That we may wait, if we choose, can not be denied; but we must realize that in such a case we are taking the same risks as if we decided not to wait, but to believe.

In the second place, the thesis defended above presupposes as the ideal of knowledge, not the negative imperative of avoidance of error, but the positive imperative of the attainment of truth. But these two imperatives are logically distinct; for obviously errors may be avoided without bringing us nearer the truth, and therefore it is really at bottom a matter of feeling to which one of the two we shall adhere. James personally makes a choice of the positive imperative—the one which drives a man into battle even at the risk of wounds—over against the negative imperative which leaves him inactive, a prey to everlasting suspense. But this observance of the positive imperative to the neglect of the negative one is advocated only for the cases of genuine options. In purely scientific research

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.



we are told that it is possible to wait for objective evidence and therefore possible to follow the second imperative; even in most practical matters options are seldom unavoidable and momentous. If so, we ask with James: Where do the really genuine options, that can not be decided on intellectual grounds, lie?

In our search for the place of religious faith, we have followed James far enough to look back upon the following steps in the structure of his argument. First, the goal of philosophy is the rationalization of the world. Secondly, the intellect, or, as James puts it, the theoretical side of man, can not reach this goal unaided. Thirdly, this intellect rests upon the will, inasmuch as faith, which is a practical attitude, assists theoretical knowledge in the attainment of truth. Fourthly, faith not only actually has influenced knowledge at all points, but indeed must be the final judge in cases where objective evidence is wanting and where a decision must nevertheless be reached, in cases of genuine options. We have now reached the point where James asks, Where do such options exist? And the answer to this is at the same time the answer to our original question, Where does religious faith find its place in James's philosophy?

Among the questions to which life obliges us to give some definite answer, and which are not susceptible of objective evidence, James cites, first of all, questions of value, judgments of worth, moral questions. "The question of having moral beliefs at all or not having them is decided by our will"; and so, too, are questions of the truth or falsehood of our moral judgments; the intellect can decide nothing in these cases. "Moral skepticism can no more be refuted or proved by logic than intellectual skepticism can."<sup>1</sup> But under this general class of questions, there falls a more special type of genuine option, and it is to this special type that the religious hypothesis belongs. The characteristic of this new type of option is this, that faith is not only justified in deciding the option because knowledge based on objective proof is wanting, but that faith is indeed logically *forced* to decide, *inasmuch as faith is a necessary factor in the realization of its object*. "*And where faith in a fact can help create the fact*, that would be an insane logic which should say that faith running ahead of scientific evidence is the 'lowest kind of immorality' into which a thinking being can fall."<sup>2</sup> To this class of options, now, belong not only the religious hypothesis, but all sorts of decisions about personal and every-day attitudes, and as an example of this latter kind of option I cite the following case, especially interesting for our purpose because James himself cites it

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.



on several occasions as a perfect analogy to the option formed by the religious hypothesis. "Suppose, for instance, that you are climbing a mountain, and have worked yourself into a position from which the only escape is by a terrible leap. Have faith that you can successfully make it, and your feet are nerved to its accomplishment. But mistrust yourself, and think of all the sweet things you have heard the scientists say of *maybes*, and you will hesitate so long that, at last, all unstrung and trembling, and launching yourself in a moment of despair, you roll in the abyss. In such a case (and it belongs to an enormous class), the part of wisdom as well as of courage is to *believe what is in the line of your needs*, for only by such belief is the need fulfilled. Refuse to believe and you shall indeed be right, for you shall irretrievably perish. But believe, and again you shall be right, for you shall save yourself. You make one or the other of two possible universes true by your trust or mistrust, —both universes having been only *maybes*, in this particular, before you contributed your act."<sup>1</sup>

The question to be answered now, is this: What does James's religious hypothesis, which forms this latter type of option and is an analogy to the cited case, assert? How does James conceive its content?

In 'Reflex Action and Theism' we learn that God is the object of religious belief and that God's essence lies in this, that He is the deepest power of the universe. He must be conceived as a mental personality for the reason that he ascribes worth to certain things and recognizes our attitude toward those things. God is a power not ourselves, 'which not only makes for righteousness, but means it, and which recognizes us.'<sup>2</sup> This optimistic side of religion is emphasized most especially in those essays in which James recommends

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59. As this is a case of belief verifying itself, it bears an outward resemblance to James's later pragmatic theory: that truth is verified belief. It is therefore interesting to note that this resemblance is entirely outward; in its implications our theory is absolutely opposed to the pragmatic view of action or workability as a test of belief. For every belief which verifies itself by first creating the fact it refers to 'works' and has validity: there is no possibility of its not working, and thus action or workability can no longer be considered the test of validity of a belief. "You make one or the other of two possible universes true by your trust or mistrust": the validity of your trust or mistrust is not then tested by the fact that one or the other only *can make a universe*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Will to Believe,' p. 122. In this paragraph it is not possible, as in the last, to give a purely objective account of James's position, for his statements are too varied and apparently too contradictory to be presented uncritically, while it would be misrepresentation to simply ignore their inconsistencies.

religious faith to voluntary choice. Accordingly, in the 'Will to Believe' religion is conceived to affirm two theses; first, that the best things in the universe are the eternal things—the ones that have the final word—the 'overlapping' things; in short, that 'perfection is eternal': and secondly, that we are better off, even now, if we believe these affirmations to be true.<sup>1</sup>

In 'The Varieties of Religious Experience' another formulation of the content of religious belief is given. Here we are told that it includes the following beliefs: first, that the visible world is part of the more spiritual universe from which it draws its chief significance; secondly, that a harmonious relation with that higher universe is our true end; thirdly, that through inner communion with its spirit we receive an influx of spiritual energy which produces effects within the phenomenal world.<sup>2</sup> It is in this production of effects—in this influence on conduct—that the significance of religion is conceived to lie: religion posits facts which if believed make a difference in the moral life. Thus religious belief is always characterized by 'the feeling of uneasiness, the sense that there is something wrong about us as we naturally stand,' and the sense 'that we are saved from the wrongness by making the proper connection with the higher powers.' 'In . . . developed minds . . . the wrongness takes a moral character, and the salvation takes a mystical tinge.'<sup>3</sup> Again: "The unseen region . . . is not merely ideal, for it produces effects in this world. When we commune with it, work is actually done upon our finite personality, for we are turned into new men and consequences in the way of conduct follow in the natural world upon our regenerative change. . . . The universe, at those parts of it which our personal being constitutes, takes a turn genuinely for the worse or for the better in proportion as each one of us fulfills or evades God's demands."<sup>4</sup> According to this conception, the significance of the religious hypothesis would, then, appear to be drawn solely from its relation to the moral life. This conception of religion is clarified and elaborated in the essay 'Is Life Worth Living?' Here the essence of religious belief is found to lie in the belief in an invisible world-order of some kind, in which the riddles of the natural order are solved, 'and in its relation to which the true significance of our present mundane life consists.' For only the belief in such a world-order lends worth to life, because only then can one feel certain that the courage and patience of this life will eventualize and bear fruit in another—a

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Lecture XX.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 308.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 516-517.

spiritual—world. This life, then, is worth living because we can make of it morally what we choose; the spiritual world is a possibility which our faith realizes. The question whether life is worth living or not is therefore analogous to the option cited above: life is worth living if I believe it to be so.<sup>1</sup>

It would seem, then, that faith in the unseen order is contained in one's faith in the worth of life, for only by means of religious faith can one believe life to be worth living and only because of one's faith in the worth of life can one make real the worth of life. James expresses this relation as follows: "Now, in this description of faiths that verify themselves, I have assumed that our faith in an invisible order is what inspires those efforts and that patience which makes this visible order good for moral man. Our faith in the seen world's goodness (goodness now means fitness for successful moral and religious life) has verified itself by leaning on our faith in the unseen world. But will our faith in the unseen world similarly verify itself? Who knows?" James gives his answer to this question: "I confess that I do not see why the very existence of an invisible world may not in part depend on the personal response which any one of us may make to the religious appeal. God himself, in short, may draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity."<sup>2</sup> But how are we to understand this answer of James? In the first place, it is not clear how the existence of a world-order can be *partially* dependent at all, and how we can properly speak of differences in the quantity of God's vital strength. But there is a further difficulty presented in the relation that the worth of life is said to bear to religious faith. The argument used by James for establishing this relation may best be exposed by duplicating it in an analogous case of an every-day nature. A child asks himself: Is this day, so full of unpleasant tasks, which I must either do or leave undone, worth living? Shall I rise, or shall I pretend to be ill and remain in bed? If now the child, although he has no certainty, should believe that his mother will give him a gift 'to-morrow' in case he should perform his tasks properly to-day, this expected reward will make the day worth living, and faith in the consequences of his industry will stimulate him to industry; he will rise, work, and accomplish his tasks. Thus James's argument. But is it logical? Is the to-day indeed worth living for the child on account of the task accomplished by him? What was the definition of the worth of the to-day with which we started? Was it not dependent upon that other day, the to-morrow which was to complete it, by presents, etc.?

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52 ff.

<sup>2</sup> 'Will to Believe,' p. 61 ff.

The belief in the possible rewards of this to-morrow engenders the belief of to-day's worth in the child's mind. The worth of to-day may not therefore be ascribed to the fact that the child was industrious and good. Indeed, it can not be so ascribed, for it was only on the strength of that other belief that the child performed its task and realized the worth of to-day. Logically, the realization of the gift is implied in the realization of the worth of to-day. Therefore, James may not answer with any 'maybe' or compromise. It follows with absolute necessity that if life is made worth living through faith in its termination in another world-order, this other world-order is somehow (difficult as it may be to conceive just how) realized when the worth of life is realized. The subsequently introduced conception which ascribes the worth of life to the intrinsic worth of a will for the good, is logically uncalled for. Indeed, on the contrary, the moral life, the life of exertion and sacrifice to duty, is valuable only because, according to James, it is the life which 'bears fruit' in that other world-order. The thought is, in brief, this: believe in the spiritual world-order and you must necessarily believe that life is worth living, for you will believe in the moral life; and in living the moral life you will realize the moral world order, which, if it be not the religious world-order, at least implies it.

And, in truth, it would seem that James's unseen spiritual world-order is at bottom a moral world-order; for how else can an order in which our moral actions and willing attitudes are recognized and bear fruit, be conceived than as a moral world-order?

Indeed, in his essay 'The Sentiment of Rationality' James identifies the two explicitly. The question of the morality of the universe is here pronounced to be the fundamental question of life, and its negation is termed 'materialism.'<sup>1</sup> But in a preceding passage it had been stated that he who stood for God, immortality, morality and freedom, was in the lists against materialism. It would therefore seem that according to our author these questions are the religious questions after all. And we know that the moral world-order belongs to a class of truths that demand personal effort for the realization of their objects, and hence for their very existence as truth, and that this personal effort is dependent on subjective energy, and subjective energy in turn on a previous belief in the truth itself.<sup>2</sup> To quote James's own words: "In every proposition whose bearing is universal (and such are all the propositions of philosophy)"—to which the hypothesis of the moral world is reckoned—"the acts of the subject and their consequences throughout eternity should be included in the formula."

<sup>1</sup> 'Will to Believe,' p. 103 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95 ff.

If  $M$  be the entire world, *minus* the reaction of the thinking individual, then the entire world which forms the material and matter of philosophic propositions must be represented by  $M + X$ ,  $X$  standing for the reaction of the thinker and its results. The character of the whole, then, obviously depends on the character of the  $X$ . This fact, says James, must be considered in the question of optimism and pessimism. The world can be made good or bad only through our power to produce good and bad: the  $X$  gives the  $M$  its value. Therefore it may be said that "wherever the facts to be formulated contain such contribution, we may logically, legitimately and inexpugnably believe what we desire. The belief creates its verification. The thought becomes literally father to the fact, as the wish was father to the thought."<sup>1</sup>

Just so in the case of the question whether or not the universe is moral. Materialism denies absolute value, whereas the moralists believe that the moral order rests upon an ultimate and absolute 'thou shalt.' Here again it is the  $X$ , the personal attitude, which gives to the world its kind and degree of value, and we can not properly speak of objective evidence or verification until the last man has had his say and has contributed his share to the still unfinished  $X$ ; and if we decide not to react because still in doubt, we are making a decision of practical importance for the reason alone that through our decision to doubt we may miss the goods which we might have gained by a decision to believe. In moral matters skepticism is no possible attitude; he who is not for is against.

However this passage may be interpreted, in the essay 'The Will to Believe' James takes a definite stand. Religious faith, which holds the good and the righteous things of the world to be the everlasting ones, is here explicitly asserted to be a self-realizing faith, and the religious hypothesis is incorporated in the class of self-realizing options. Indeed, the essay's object is to prove that religion is a truth which depends on our personal attitude, and that therefore faith based on desire, that is, free belief, is not only justifiable but imperative. It is justifiable, because we have in the religious hypothesis a real option; momentous, inasmuch as there is much to gain or lose; and unavoidable, because if we decide to doubt we lose the good as surely as if we cast our decision against it. Here, then, the skeptical attitude is not avoidance of the choice, but is itself a choice of a special kind: it is a decision to risk the loss of truth rather than to accept the possibility of error. Here is a decision, not of the intellect over against mere feeling, but of one volitional impulse over against another, both combined with the same risk.

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 103.

Surely man has the right, if he run a risk, to choose the kind he prefers.

But religious faith is not only justifiable, but also logically imperative. This is clear when once it is understood that religion is essentially a truth dependent for its very existence on preliminary faith in its existence. Of such truths we are told: "*And where faith in a fact can help create the fact*, that would be an insane logic which should say that faith running ahead of scientific evidence is the 'lowest kind of immorality' into which a thinking being can fall."

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25, and see above, p. 12.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BASIS OF THE DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH: THE THEORY OF JUDGMENT

Belief, its nature and the conditions which give rise to it<sup>1</sup>—Belief as will—The freedom of will and of belief—Summary.

THE traditional theory of judgment asserts that a judgment is a proposition connecting 'ideas' by a copula, and that propositions may be positive, negative, hypothetical and so forth. It is obvious, however, that in a disbelieved or doubted proposition, as well as in a question, the same combination of ideas obtains. We must say, therefore, that 'the way in which the ideas are combined is a part of the inner constitution of the thoughts, objects or content,' and that the object is a whole, whether it be simple or composed of related parts—such as the relation of subject and object, for instance. After the inner constitution of an object has been defined in a proposition, the question comes up in reference to the total object: Is it real? Is this proposition true or not? And in the answer to this question lies the new psychic act, which is called 'belief.' In every proposition, so far as it is affirmed, doubted or denied, there are four different elements: subject, predicate, their relation—three elements which form the object to be judged—and lastly, the attitude of the mind in regard to this object; and this latter is the element of 'belief.' Belief, then, is 'the mental state or function of cognizing reality.' Every one has the experience, and thus knows the difference between merely imagining a thing and believing in its reality. In its inner nature belief is a feeling closely akin to that known to the psychology of will as 'consent.' Both consent and belief are characterized by the facts that the stability of their objects is such as to fill the mind to the exclusion of all contradictory ideas. But this inward stability of the content of the mind is as characteristic of disbelief and negation as it is of belief. An object, in fact, is disbelieved only when some contradictory object is believed, and therefore it may be said that disbelief is in essence only 'an incidental complication of belief.' The psychological opposite of belief is not disbelief, but doubt.

Of the inner constitution of belief nothing more can be said; with Mill, it must be held to be 'primordial and ultimate,' a state of mind

<sup>1</sup> 'Psychology,' Vol. II., Chapter 21, 'The Perception of Reality,' p. 283.

*sui generis*, and the only question we can therefore profitably ask is: What are the conditions of belief—under what circumstances do we think things real? The first condition is put in this way: “Any object which remains uncontradicted is *ipso facto* believed and posited as absolute reality.” The truth of this may be realized by the following example. Let us imagine the mind of a new-born child waiting for experience. Let us suppose that experience begins in the shape of a visual sensation, a burning candle against a dark background, and nothing else. This picture fills the child’s mind completely, and constitutes its entire universe. If now the candle were merely imaginary and no ‘original’ corresponded to it in the outside world, would this hallucinatory candle be taken for real? Most assuredly it would be believed by the mind of the child, for it constitutes its entire universe. It is its all; its whole attention is absorbed by it, and no alternative can come up at all. The child’s mind can not, therefore, do otherwise than ascribe reality to the candle. Spinoza long ago recognized these facts and illustrated them in the example of the boy and the winged horse. He showed how the very idea of the horse present in the boy’s mind would necessarily awaken belief in its existence, were it not for the fact that another idea annulling the horse’s existence was joined to it. In short, every imagined object is affirmed, unless it clashes with other objects. The next question to come up is: How can objects clash? How can one thing thought of be contradicted by another? And the answer is: They can do so only if one thought expresses something ‘inadmissible’ about the other. If the child says of the candle, or the boy of the winged horse, that the candle or the horse exists in the outside world, even when not perceived, he asserts something to be true of the outer world which is contradictory to everything we know of that world. A choice must then be made between the present perceptions and the other knowledge of the outer world. If the other knowledge of the outer world be adhered to, the present perceptions must be rejected at least ‘so far as their relation to that world goes.’ If one merely dreams of a winged horse, it occasions no clash; the horse exists in its own individual place, and claims no connection with other places of the world. If, however, I identify the winged horse with the horse in my stable, and assert that my horse has grown wings in the stable, I am asserting something which contradicts what I know of the world in which the stable stands.

These two examples illustrate still another distinction, that between existential and attributive judgments. ‘The candle exists as an outer reality’ is a case of the former, and ‘my horse in the stable has a pair of wings’ is a case of the latter sort of judgment, and it



follows that 'all propositions, whether attributive or existential, are believed through the very fact of being conceived, unless they clash with other propositions believed at the same time by affirming that their terms are the same with the terms of these other propositions.' The dream candle has existence, but not the same kind of existence (existence *extra mentem meam*) as the candle for the waking consciousness has. "The whole distinction of real and unreal, the whole psychology of belief, disbelief, and doubt, is thus grounded on two mental facts—first, that we are liable to think differently of the same; and second, that when we have done so, we can choose which way of thinking to adhere to and which to disregard." The things we choose become our realities; the existence we adhere to becomes our real existence; but those other objects, to which we do not consent, the rejected things, what becomes of them? In practise these rejected objects are considered non-existent. They do not count; but as they actually have existence, namely, existence as phantasms, as errors, etc., they must in theory, certainly, be counted a part of the universe as well as the 'realities.' Indeed, the universe with which the philosopher is concerned—the world in its totality—consists not only of realities plus fancies, errors and illusions, but of many more sub-universes, which the practical man can distinguish but dimly, but which the philosopher attempts to relate and connect into a world-whole. The most important and most frequently discriminated sub-universes are:

1. The world of sense or of physical things, as we apprehend them, such as heat, sound and color.
2. The world of science, or of physical things as the learned conceive them, in which nothing is real but solids, fluids and their laws of motion.
3. The world of ideal relations or abstract truths, formulated into logical, esthetic, ethical, mathematical and metaphysical propositions.
4. The world of prejudices, or 'idols of the tribe.'
5. The many supernatural worlds; worlds of faith and of fancy.
6. The worlds of individual opinion.
7. Those of madness and vagary.

"Every object we think gets at last referred to one world or another of this or of some similar list." These different worlds are, as was said, in man's mind in a chaotic mix-up; and every world is real in its own way while it absorbs the attention; 'the reality lapses with the attention.' As every one, however, has dominant habits of attention, these practically elect from among the various worlds some one which for him will become the world of ultimate realities. This world will then be his test—whatever contradicts it is shoved

into another world or rejected. And, as all the worlds have existence in the strict sense of the term, this process shows the 'everlasting partiality of our nature, our inveterate propensity to choice.'

Everything that is conceived, then, may have reality in a metaphysical sense, reality for God; but man needs practical reality, and in order to be practically real an object must not only be conceived, but must be found *interesting* and *important*. The worlds, whose objects are neither one nor the other, are neglected, are rejected as unreal. In this relative sense, then, reality over against unreality means simply 'relation to our emotional and active life . . . whatever excites and stimulates our interest is real.' If an object affects us in such a way as to call forth consent and recognition, we 'believe' in it, it is real; not otherwise. The object of belief, then, reality or real existence, is something other than all other predicates of a subject. If we add predicates to a subject, we enrich the latter's content; if we believe in an object, and assert its reality, we merely establish practical relations between the objects and ourselves. These relations are our real relations unless or until they are superseded by others. "The *fons et origo* of all reality, whether from the absolute or the practical point of view, is thus subjective, is ourselves." As logical thinkers without emotional reactions, we would indeed ascribe reality to all thoughts and phenomena; as "thinkers with emotional reaction, we give what seems to us a still higher degree of reality to whatever things we select and emphasize and turn to *with a will*."

We reach conclusions: all reality is anchored in our sense of our own reality and life—in the ego considered as an active and emotional term. Reality, radiating from the ego, transmits itself to those things which have an intimate and continuous connection with life. As Descartes made the indubitable reality of the *cogito* go bail for all that the *cogito* included, so we attribute reality to all that is immediately connected with the indubitable reality of our present existence, and the only question that remains to be answered is: What are these objects that are so connected with our present reality as to have the power of awakening our interest? A simple and direct answer can not be given, for is not the history of human thought itself the unfinished attempt to answer the question of where our true interests lie and what things shall be called realities? Psychology can point out a few facts of its own, however. Sensible experience is always considered real, because its vividness compels attention, and it is safe to say that no conception which does not terminate in the world of orderly, sensible experience can prevail. A conceived object will appeal in vain for belief, if it have no vivid

and permanent sensible object for its 'term.' In short, 'conceived objects must show sensible effects' in order to be believed. This is what is meant by verification in science. "Sensible vividness or pungency is then the vital factor in reality when once the conflict between objects, and the connecting of them together in the mind, has begun." Among sensations themselves those which are the practically important ones will be considered the most real, along with the most permanent and esthetically apprehensible ones. So, for instance, the real color of an object is the color sensation it gives when most favorably lighted for vision. Of all sensations, however, those are most belief-compelling and the most real which are productive of pleasure and pain—a theory already expressed by Locke.<sup>1</sup>

Next in reality to sensible objects are those which arouse the passions and active impulses. "Every exciting thought in the natural man carries credence with it. To conceive with passion is *eo ipso* to affirm." In short, all conceived objects that awaken interesting emotions—as hate, desire and fear, or motor impulses—are believed. "Our requirements in the way of reality terminate in our own acts and emotions, our own pleasures and pains;" these are the fixities on which is suspended the chain of our beliefs.

As for theories, now, one may say in general: they are judged according to the same simple standards, however difficult the application may prove in detail. Of alternative theories, the one which explains most satisfactorily the world of sensible experience will be believed; of two theories equally strong in this respect, the one which in addition satisfies our volitional and emotional needs, is bound to prevail. The system which is richest, most simple and harmonious, will be chosen for belief.

We have seen that, according to James's conception, the essence of belief manifests itself in the act of choice; our next task will be to learn his views on the relation between will and belief in detail. After that, his theory of the will itself will be presented.

Will, as well as belief, we have been told, is nothing other than a certain manner of attending to objects, and consenting to their stable presence in consciousness. The objects of the will are those whose existence depends, on the one hand, on our thought, on the other hand, on our actions; while objects of belief 'do not change according as we think regarding them.' But this difference in objects of will and of belief does not affect the attitude of the mind toward them; in both cases it is the same: the mind conceives the object and consents to its existence, it chooses it for its reality. "Will and be-

<sup>1</sup> 'Essay,' Book 4, Chapter 2, paragraph 14; *ibid.*, Chapter 11, paragraph 8.

lief, in short, meaning a certain relation between objects and the self, are two names for one and the same *psychological* phenomenon. . . . The causes and conditions of the peculiar relation must be the same in both. The free-will question arises as regards belief. If our wills are indeterminate, so must our beliefs be, etc. The first act of free will, in short, would naturally be to believe in free will, etc."<sup>1</sup> "The most compendious possible formula perhaps would be that *our belief and attention* are the same fact. For the moment, what we attend to is reality; attention is a motor reaction; and we are so made that sensations force attention from us."<sup>2</sup> But if belief is a motor reaction, it is pertinent to ask, How can man believe freely, how can he 'will to believe'? He *can not* do so *suddenly*, is James's answer, but there is a very simple method by which he can bring himself to believe as he chooses *gradually*; he need only act *as if* a thing *were real* and continue so to act, and the object will finally grow to have such a connection with his life that it will become real.

Thus will, belief and attention would seem to be different names for the same mental attitude, and if we ask just how will and belief resolve themselves into attention, we find the answer in James's 'Theory of the Will,' which may be summed up as follows, in James's own terminology.<sup>3</sup>

Every representation of a movement realizes in some degree the actual movement which is its object; and awakens it in the maximum degree whenever it is not kept from so doing by an antagonistic representation present simultaneously to the mind. The express fiat, or act of mental consent to the movement, comes in when the neutralization of the antagonistic and inhibiting idea is required. When the conditions are simple, no express fiat is needed, for the reason that consciousness is in its very nature impulsive. "Movement is the natural immediate effect of feeling, irrespective of what the quality of the feeling may be. It is so in reflex action, it is so in emotional expression, it is so in the voluntary life." The voluntary fiat comes in in deliberate action, that is, when the mind is the seat of many ideas related to one another in antagonistic or in favorable ways. One of the ideas is that of an act. By itself this idea becomes a movement; some of the additional ideas present to consciousness, however, block the motor discharge, while others again may solicit it to take place. The result is the feeling of unrest known as indecision. While it lasts we are said to deliberate, and when finally the original suggestion either prevails and makes the movement take place, or gets

<sup>1</sup> 'Psychology,' Vol. II., p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322, foot-note.

<sup>3</sup> 'Psychology,' Chapter XXVI.

definitely quenched by its antagonist, we are said to decide, or utter our voluntary fiat in favor of one or the other thought. The reinforcing and inhibiting ideas meanwhile are termed reasons or motives by which the decision is brought about.

Now the immense majority of human decisions are, to be sure, decisions without effort, but there are some decisions in which effort is a necessary factor, and although its existence in consciousness can not be doubted, its significance is a matter about which great difference of opinion has prevailed. Questions as momentous as those of the existence of spiritual causality and of predestination—as against free will—depend on its interpretation. What, then, are the true conditions under which the feeling of volitional effort is found? When we say that consciousness (or the mental process which goes on with it) is in its very nature impulsive, the proviso must be added: if it be sufficiently intense. Now there is a certain normal ratio in the impulsive power of different sorts of motive which characterizes what may be called ordinary healthiness of will. Compared with states of consciousness representing objects of instinctive reaction, or with feelings, or ideas of pleasure and pain, or with ideas to which we have grown accustomed so that the habit of reacting on them is ingrained, or with the idea of objects comparatively near in space or time—compared with all these states of consciousness, all far-off considerations, all abstract conceptions, unaccustomed reasons and motives, have little or no impulsive power. They prevail, when they do prevail, with effort; and the normal sphere of effort is thus found wherever non-instinctive motives for behavior are to rule the day. Effort comes in wherever a rarer and more ideal impulse is called upon to neutralize others of a more instinctive and habitual kind, wherever strongly explosive tendencies are to be checked, or strongly obstructive conditions are to be overcome. The facts may be symbolized thus: *P* standing for the propensity, *I* for the ideal impulse and *E* for effort:

$$\begin{aligned} I \text{ per se} &< P \\ I + E &> P \end{aligned}$$

Therefore ideal or moral action is action in the line of the greatest resistance; that is, in the line of *I per se*, which, upon addition of effort, becomes victorious over the line of the least resistance, *P*. As to the nature of this effort, it is, of course, inner effort—effort of attention—which makes the idea dominate in consciousness; and ‘attention with effort is all that any case of volition implies.’ The essential achievement of the will, in short, when it is most voluntary, is to attend to a difficult object and hold it fast before the mind.

The so doing is the *fiat*; and it is a mere physiological incident that when the object is thus attended to immediate motor consequences should ensue.

"Effort of attention is thus the essential phenomenon of will." The terminus of the psychological process in volition, the point to which the will is directly applied, is always an *idea*. The only resistance which our will can possibly encounter is the resistance which such an idea offers to being attended to at all. To attend to it is, then, the only volitional act it can perform, and if we want a single term to cover the conditions upon which the impulsive and inhibitive quality of objects depends we had better call it *interest*. In fact, 'what we attend to' and 'what interests us' are synonymous terms. In the chapter on 'Attention,' we come across a new and somewhat divergent formulation of this theory.<sup>1</sup> Here our interest in objects is given as the only reason we can have for attending to them. Our interest is asserted to be the *cause* of our attention. Attention itself is here classified as, first, either immediate or derived; immediate if the stimulating object is stimulating *per se*, derived if it is interesting only through its association with some other object. Secondly, attention may be either passive, reflex and effortless, or active and voluntary; and 'voluntary attention is always derived; we never make an effort to attend to an object except for the sake of some remote interest which the effort will serve.'

The question now of free will and hence of free belief, according to this theory, relates solely to the amount of attention or consent which we can at any time put forth. Are the duration and intensity of this effort fixed functions of the object, or are they variable quantities, so that, given the same objects, more or less effort might be put forth? In other words, is voluntary attention a resultant or a force, cause or effect? James holds that this question admits of no answer on psychological grounds. Determinism and indeterminism are theoretically of equal worth, as it is simply impossible to know whether within any given case more attention could have been bestowed or not.

Theoretically, then, one must be agnostic, in that from the scientific point of view it is problematic whether determinism or indeterminism is in the right; but, practically, the freedom of the will may and indeed must be accepted on the very grounds of the theoretical *non liquet*, for the following reasons: first, because we need freedom in the interests of our moral life; and secondly, because if freedom really existed, we could never get at that truth excepting by freely choosing to believe it. In short, '*freedom's first deed should*

<sup>1</sup> 'Psychology,' Vol. I., p. 402 ff., especially p. 416.

*be to affirm itself.*' To be sure, man need not affirm freedom. He has the right to remain agnostic, only he must fully realize that in such a case he is adopting an attitude which is precisely the same sort of volitional decision as the attitude which freely declares for freedom of will and belief.<sup>1</sup> This latter attitude is the one which James decides to adopt. He freely wills to believe in free will.

We have before us a theory which, if not systematic in form, is, at least, rich and full in content. Beyond the limits of demonstrable knowledge there lies no longer the not-yet-known or the unknowable; a whole world of possibilities and the free opportunity to grasp all it desires, tempts the spirit. For demonstrable knowledge forms at best but a fraction of the convictions with which life is judged and lived, and is itself built upon a foundation of unproved and unprovable postulates; indeed, knowledge is in essence nothing other than belief. When I judge, I believe, and that means that I express my volitional nature, and choose my experience. But evidence for the correctness of my judgment is obtainable in few cases; in the far greater part of human decisions one can not afford to wait for evidence, and in some others the nature of the case excludes evidence prior to the belief, in that belief is itself a necessary factor for the existence of its object. Here the rule for behavior reads: do not adopt a problematic attitude, but judge, decide, and believe freely what you choose, for you will make real what you have chosen to believe through the very fact of your belief. Such a case is presented by the religious hypothesis.

The treatment of the relation of practical and theoretical rationality may be considered a first step in the argument leading to these conclusions, or, more accurately put, a presumption in favor of the religious hypothesis. For he who holds the practical ego to be at the root of all theoretical activity, must admit that such a state of affairs disarms every argument directed against practical needs and practical rationality as 'merely' practical and hence of inferior validity. But, as at the same time we are told that the intellect has a function, nay, even the right to rationalize according to its principles wherever it can, and the practical will finds its place only where the intellect is incapable of fulfilling its task—the justification of practical needs given above can not be considered a defence of any one volition or practical need.

The positive argument in defense of religious belief only sets in when it is shown that there are 'options' in which the intellect can not come to a decision, and that the religious hypothesis forms such an option.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 447 ff.; Vol. II., p. 569 ff.



Having reached this point, the negative results contained in the first step are turned to positive account, for now we are told: in the case of the religious hypothesis and similar options, a problematic attitude is itself a passional decision and is therefore combined with as much risk as a passional for or against. Hence no reason holds good why the will should not decide in the line of its needs, while there are decisive reasons why it should, in that as practical creatures we are continually forced into action. Therefore faith or volitional decision without evidence coercive to the intellect is justified.

The last step in the argument attempts to prove that the religious hypothesis belongs to a special type of options the intellect can not decide, a type characterized by the fact that belief is a necessary factor in the realization of the fact to which it refers. Only if man's actions are inspired by a belief in the existence of the religious world-order can the religious world-order become a reality.

Obviously belief is here measured by action; and thus "the whole defence of religious faith hinges upon action. If the action required or inspired by the religious hypothesis is in no way different from that dictated by the naturalistic hypothesis, then religious faith is a pure superfluity, better pruned away, and controversy about its legitimacy is a piece of idle trifling, unworthy of serious minds."<sup>1</sup> But the action itself depends, we are told, on belief: when I stand on the precipice and must jump to save my life, or when I am to fulfill my moral ideal, I must *freely choose to believe* (for my intellect can not decide), in the one case, in the strength of my muscles, and in the other case, in the unseen spiritual world-order. Here belief, being a necessary factor in the creation of its object, is not only justified, but is imperative, and we are told: Will to believe, express your volitional ego in choice, and freely adopt whatever belief is in the line of your desires and needs.

Thus the defense of religious belief presupposes the psychological possibility of free belief. And as it is just this possibility which James attempted to prove in the theories contained in his 'Psychology,' we are justified in considering these theories the foundation for his defense of religious faith. First, then, we learn that belief is the kernel of all judgment whatsoever; secondly, that it is the same psychical attitude as will; thirdly, that both will and belief resolve themselves into voluntary attention; and fourthly, that voluntary attention may be assumed to be indeterminate or free.

Having thus established the possibility of a free will to believe, or free belief, nothing remained to be added but a hint how to effect such a freely willed belief in practise; and this information could be

<sup>1</sup> 'The Will to Believe,' p. 29, foot-note.



given in one sentence: *act* in cold blood as if the thing in question were real, and keep acting as if it were real, and it will infallibly end by growing into such a connection with your life that it will become real.



## PART II

### CRITICISM OF JAMES'S DOCTRINE

IN the criticism of this unsystematically formulated doctrine, we shall keep as closely as possible to the order of our presentation. We shall first, then, treat of the relation between theoretical and practical rationality, that is, we shall criticize the foundation that James gives to the standpoint, which, formulated in short, reads: You are justified in choosing to believe religiously because all knowledge is in essence belief, and belief is in essence a volitional act. We shall then ascertain whether James's theory of judgment really establishes free belief as a foundation for such a defense of religious faith, as would indeed be the case if James succeeded in showing that all knowledge is in essence freely chosen belief.

After that, we have to determine whether the theory of judgment confirms the existence of a free and self-realizing belief of the sort presupposed in a still more immediate way in the second step of James's argument, which, summed up, runs: You can realize the religious hypothesis *only through believing in it*; will to believe the religious hypothesis, and your belief will prove to be true. For this purpose a detailed analysis of the theory of judgment will be requisite. After learning why this theory of judgment can not serve as a foundation for James's defense of religious faith, we shall point out where the doctrine's essential logical mistakes lie. For, in our criticism, James's own premises shall be taken for granted. By these premises I understand, first, his conception of religion as a divine world-order guaranteeing that moral world-order which can be realized by us only if our conduct is inspired and stimulated by a belief in God and in the final triumph of righteousness; secondly, the doctrine that knowledge is in essence a feeling of reality or an affirmation of reality, in other words, that judging is in essence belief. Taking for granted these two premises, we shall endeavor to prove that the latter does not, and can not logically, serve as a foundation for the defense of the former. This proof will consist, on the one hand, in the disclosure of the implications of these premises, and of their incompatibility with the conclusions that James deduces from them, and, on the other hand, in the demonstration of their inherent inconsistencies.

Now there are two very obvious criticisms to be made on James's doctrine, both of which have, as a matter of fact, been brought against it. First, the accusation that in this defense of religious belief, religious belief is defended at the cost of knowledge itself. The argument runs: James's justification is based on the relation of knowledge and faith, of intellect and will. Religious belief, on the one hand, and knowledge resting on a principle of certainty, on the other, can be brought into harmony only if knowledge is traced back to belief and a principle of certainty found for belief. Such a transformation of the intellect leads, in truth, to a real overthrow of the standpoint of 'intellectualism,' based as it is on the dualism of will and intellect. In James's doctrine, however, this dualism is neither obviated nor surmounted. In it, knowing and believing are not harmonized, but are separated, and if it is then asserted that the will may undertake the function of the intellect, when the latter is no longer capable of functioning, such a manner of surmounting the dualism must be considered a pseudo victory, gained at the expense of the conception of knowledge itself. This criticism has been advanced by Rickert in his essay on 'Fichtes Atheismusstreit.'<sup>1</sup>

The second criticism brought against our doctrine is the charge that it is based on a standpoint of absolute subjectivism, and obviously this criticism is closely related to the one just presented. It asserts that religious belief is defended at the cost of absolute reality itself, in that the will to believe is treated as wholly distinct from the will to know the truth. Upon analysis this will turns out to be, in fact, a will to deceive oneself, that is, to produce subjective results. These subjective results may, of course, be convictions, but they have no connection with objective validity, which is dependent on a relation between the convictions and an independent reality. This latter charge has been concisely formulated by D. S. Miller in the above-mentioned critique.<sup>2</sup>

However, it must be evident that neither one of these charges is exhaustive. In regard to the first, it is true, to be sure, that James has coordinated and separated the will and the intellect, but it is equally true that he has identified the two in his theory of the relation of will and belief. Neither can a pure subjectivism, as in the case of the second criticism, be true without further consideration; for opposed to such a charge stands James's theory of judgment, which

<sup>1</sup> H. Rickert, 'Fichtes Atheismusstreit und die Kantische Philosophie.' Berlin, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Dickinson S. Miller, 'The Will to Believe and the Duty to Doubt,' *International Journal of Ethics*, January, 1899.

seeks to trace reality, and with it truth, to the act of judgment itself.

A closer examination into these inconsistencies and the determination whether and whereby these criticisms can be confirmed, must then be our task. We proceed then to James's attempt to solve the problem of the overthrow of 'intellectualism.'

## CHAPTER III

### JAMES'S DOCTRINE AS A DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH AT THE COST OF PURE KNOWLEDGE

The relation of faith to knowledge and its significance for the overthrow of intellectualism—Paulsen's contribution to the solution of the problem of the relation between intellect and will—Criticism of Paulsen's contribution to the problem—James's contribution to the solution of the problem of the relation between intellect and will—James's solution of the problem on the basis of free belief—The result of James's solution and the dilemma in which it leaves us.

OBVIOUSLY enough the most contradictory tendencies exist side by side in James's theory of the relation of intellect and will. On the one hand we find, especially in the point of view of the essays, a decided dualism respecting knowledge and faith. It would here seem as if faith were to function only when the intellect reaches its limits. Intellectual rationality must first be satisfied, and only if this satisfaction can not be obtained in an immediate way, may it proceed through the medium of faith. But this is a subordination of both knowledge and faith under the category of thought, faith being conceived as a mere supplement to knowledge. And, indeed, James goes farther; he admits that the objects of this faith can never be quite certain, that it is always possible to doubt them. This avowal, together with his definition of faith as belief without proof, seems to give to faith a still more subordinate function, of some importance, perhaps, for the man of action, but without interest for the thinker and seeker for truth. Rickert's criticism is justly directed against this side of James's doctrine, but as a criticism of his doctrine in its totality it is in need of further proof.

- ✓ The starting-point of Rickert's criticism is a historical survey undertaken for the purpose of determining the differences in philosophies of religion, so far as these differences bear upon the *Atheismusstreit* between Fichte and Forberg.<sup>1</sup> In the course of his analysis he finds that such differences may be traced back to differences in the conception of the relations between faith and knowledge. The formulation of all possible standpoints in regard to this problem leads him to a classification and criticism of James's theory. The first conception of the relation of will and intellect to which Rickert calls attention is the one in which faith is held to be an imperative, commanding, Act as if this or that were true; but assert-

<sup>1</sup> Rickert, 'Atheismusstreit,' p. 2 ff.

ing nothing that could claim to rest upon any principle<sup>1</sup> of certainty. Here, obviously, faith and intellect are so completely separated that two unrelated worlds are the result. In the world of action, the will is authoritative, and in the world of truth-seeking, the intellect. Faith is an imperative for action, and the intellect is authoritative within the sphere of thought; no reconciliation whatever has been effected between the two.

In the second place, the relation of faith and knowledge may be so conceived that faith becomes valid not only as an imperative for the man of action, but also as an imperative for the truth-seeker, inasmuch as here faith is held to be rooted in the very nature of thought itself. For an evaluation of James's historical position, it is important to realize that this standpoint is the standpoint on which Fichte's doctrine is grounded; and I therefore recapitulate in short Rickert's analysis of Fichte's attitude.<sup>1</sup> For Fichte, then, faith is certain, because it is the imperative for the truth-seeker as such. This means, that obligation (*Sollen*)—the original practical law or the conscience—is prior to knowledge. Knowledge itself rests upon the conscience or the will, inasmuch as knowing is, in the last analysis, believing in accordance to the law of 'obligation,' that is, in essence, an intellectual act of will. This practical law, this moral imperative only can contain certainty; and only in so far as it is obeyed, and realized in theoretical activity, does thought become knowledge—become certain. Thus, by his doctrine of the primacy of the moral law, Fichte creates a new conception of the relation between faith and knowledge. Knowledge is certain just because it is based on practical faith or belief, and religious faith or belief can therefore no longer be held to be knowledge of an inferior degree, justifiable only when the more valuable theoretical knowledge reaches its limit. Indeed, faith in the moral law and the moral world-order is the corner-stone of all certainties. From this point of view the apparent coordination of the functions of intellect and will becomes in truth an identification, for it has been shown how knowledge and its principle of certainty are based on practical belief. Faith or belief, in short, is the foundation of all conviction.

Finally a third conception in view of our problem is possible. The intellect and the will may be differentiated and to the will may be accorded the right to pass judgment in cases where scientific proof is wanting. Here the will is subordinated to the intellect and knowledge is supplemented by faith. It is this conception of the relation between will and intellect which Rickert claims is the basis of much of the voluntaristic philosophy of the day, and he

<sup>1</sup> Contained in the pamphlet referred to above.

has in mind\*more especially the doctrines of Paulsen and of James. He points to the fact that in the case of these thinkers we find the argument that the voluntary side and character of a philosopher have always, as a matter of fact, influenced his system of thought, and that man has always reached his fundamental convictions through the voluntary side of his nature rather than through theoretical considerations, and that this influence is not only actual, but also justifiable, when the intellect fails to reach conclusions, as, for instance, in the synthesis and interpretation of the world in its totality. Rickert points to the leap from the *quæstio facti* to the *quæstio juris* which is here exemplified. He condemns this coordination of faith and knowledge as one which no philosophy professing to proceed scientifically can accommodate. Philosophy, he claims, seeking for truth, has room only for knowledge conceived as independent of the will. Within its sphere, faith must be regarded as the clouding of scientific knowledge. He who philosophizes in order to obtain results of universal validity must disavow the promptings of the will, if will and intellect are distinct; and most especially in the case of the philosophy of religion, where the ideal of a theoretical solution of the problems seems most difficult of attainment, and where such solution is of the greatest practical importance, infinite care must be taken to preserve intact the purity of the intellect. The overthrow of intellectualism through a bestowal of a partnership upon the will within the sphere of scientific activity is nothing else than the overthrow of the intellect itself. A real victory over intellectualism is possible only by means of a logically valid demonstration of the fact that, in the relation between the intellect seeking for truth and the evaluating will, the latter is logically prior to the former. Such a standpoint is the only justifiable form of voluntarism.

Now it is the pseudo-voluntarism expounded above with which Rickert charges James's and Paulsen's doctrines. But, although we must admit it to be true that such tendencies are strongly represented in James's doctrine, our detailed exposition has shown that these tendencies are not the only ones, nor even the prevailing ones, in the drift of James's teaching. On the contrary, James has explicitly striven to give to his doctrine a substructure in the form of a theory identifying will and knowledge. In Paulsen's work, too, there are traces of an attempt really to overcome the one-sidedness of intellectualism, and to attain harmony between intellect and will through a transformation of the conception of the intellect itself, and the reduction of theoretical knowledge to practical belief. A comparison of his arguments with those of James is instructive because it will enable us to perceive with greater clearness the new and characteristic elements in James's work.



In the introduction we saw to what historical position Paulsen considered himself entitled, and how he interpreted Kant's general standpoint. His own doctrine may be found in his 'Einleitung in die Philosophie' and 'Kants Verhältnis zur Metaphysik.' This doctrine may be summed up as follows: Philosophy is knowledge, and professes to be knowledge, but contains elements of faith in so far as it pretends to give a *Weltanschauung* and to '*disclose the meaning of things*,' for this meaning is matter for the will and for faith.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of this statement it would seem that Paulsen does not, after all, ascribe to philosophy the task of *disclosing* the meaning of the world, but rather that of giving meaning to the world, for the very next sentence in this context reads: "The philosopher reads into the world as its goal that which he himself regards as the highest good and the ultimate end of life, and only imagines that he has discovered it there by subsequent contemplation." Philosophy would thus seem to be an attitude toward the world, an evaluation of the world. It is a matter of personal faith: "Philosophy is never the product of the intellect merely, it grows out of the personality as a whole; the will gives it its direction, its goal and its fire."

The method to be employed by philosophy in the production of a *Weltanschauung* is that of the interpretation of historical life. But faith in the future is 'the firm starting-point' of such an interpretation, hence one may call this faith the 'principle of formation' of every philosophy. The interpretation of historical life then proceeds in conformity with the ideal of perfection characteristic of the philosopher, by which he sets up the *terminus ad quem*, and by means of this the *terminus a quo*, of the historical process, and thereby of nature and of the world. The *important* is thus the *essential*—here is the point at which head and heart meet and are united.<sup>2</sup>

Such are the actual facts, continues Paulsen, and Kant has formulated these thoughts in the doctrine of the postulates and of the primacy of the practical reason. "We, to be sure, would say rather: We are not here concerned with an imperative, *exacting* faith from the conscience, but with the bald fact that no one does nor can believe that reality is inimical or even indifferent toward that which he holds to be the ultimate end of life and its highest good."<sup>3</sup> But

<sup>1</sup> F. Paulsen, 'Einleitung in die Philosophie,' Siebente Auflage, p. 339 ff. Berlin, 1901.

<sup>2</sup> Here Paulsen hints at the psychological theory carried out by James. Attention is aroused only by objects important for us; objects are important in proportion as they are related to our practical purposes and ideals; by arousing attention the important becomes the real.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 347.

he who believes in the final victory of reason and of truth, thereby acknowledges a moral world-order. Kant, now, attempted to justify this actual faith, not by means of any objective proof for the predominance of the good, but by the consideration that, as the practical reason recognizes values, and as the moral law is the foundation of this valuation, faith in the moral world-order is based on the absolutely certain moral law or imperative. This fundamental thought of Kant's is correct, says Paulsen, but may be better formulated as follows: To a human being whose will is guided by the 'highest purposes of mankind' a belief in the moral world-order is 'natural and necessary' and inevitably becomes the corner-stone of his philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Paulsen then proceeds to set up certain values as the highest values, and he challenges those who deny a moral world-order to prove that these values are not realized in this world. But such a proof, he avers, is not within the province of the intellect. The intellect can not solve the question, but if it nevertheless wishes to take a stand, it would, guided by biological theories, be obliged to decide that of all possible worlds this world is the one best suited to mankind.

These considerations on the subject of religious belief, now, do not purpose to serve as a theoretical proof of the validity of religious faith nor as a factor in the generation of religious faith; their object is merely to insure one's judgment against the adoption of the contrary attitude—that of negative dogmatism. Religion never can be produced by philosophy; it is constituted by historical concrete symbols. Nevertheless, religion may harmonize with philosophy, 'faith with free thought.' "Religion does not exact from man that he shall hold what is untenable, but that he shall believe that which satisfies his will, and does not contradict his intellect."<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions concerning Paulsen's standpoint from these remarks. But so much at least is clear: he identifies philosophy with *Weltanschauung*, and bases the latter on faith—on those beliefs, namely, which are innate to the philosopher, and by means of which he attempts his task, the interpretation of the world by the interpretation of the world's history. These beliefs, constitutive of the fundamental principle of philosophy, are, according to Paulsen, the beliefs in the future, in progress and perfection, and they are said to lead directly to a belief in the moral world-order which is somehow connected with the will 'guided by higher purposes.' To a being with such a will for

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 349 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 361.

the good, faith in a moral order is 'natural and necessary' and therefore justified. The philosopher, then, may harbor any faith that is compatible with the willing and feeling side of his nature and is not incompatible with his intelligence. This last confrontation of intellect and will is carried out no farther. Although the chapter in which it occurs is entitled 'Knowledge and Faith,' the reader is left in the dark as regards just how faith and reason can contradict one another, and if so, why reason should have the primacy over faith, if faith be the very principle of formation of philosophy. The only explanatory hint to the solution of this riddle is contained in the psychological theory indicated above. The difficulty grows still more complicated when one becomes acquainted with Paulsen's further remarks on the subject in his book '*Kants Verhältniss zur Metaphysik*' (p. 25 ff.).

Here philosophy is no longer conceived as an evaluation of the world according to articles of faith. Philosophy—which may, no doubt, be considered identical with metaphysics—is said to be a science whose task it is to supply a foundation for "a general conception or synthesis of reality (a *Weltanschauung*) by means of a process of thought constructed on the basis of given facts. These facts are to be taken from the special sciences, and thought must progress from these empirical actualities, which form its only sure foothold, up to the contemplation of things in their totality." Contrasted with philosophy or metaphysics, religion is now introduced, and is said to rest on faith, more especially on the particular belief that reality is ultimately determined by the good—by will directed toward the good. This belief can not claim to be knowledge, because it can be proved neither by experience nor by speculation.

In this new formulation of his position, Paulsen considers himself again in agreement with Kant. Religion is now separated from philosophy; philosophy has become a science through becoming demonstrable, whereas religion rests upon the fact that man believes in the realization of his good will. As is known, Kant did not, however, accept this faith as a mere fact, but attempted to ground it on the certainty of the moral law, and to derive this certainty from an analysis of the nature of the reason itself. It is perhaps this doctrine of Kant's—the doctrine of the primacy of the practical reason—that Paulsen has in mind when, in speaking of Kant, he remarks: "It is in the form of the foundation and exposition of these thoughts only that I should pursue a different course, one which a number of thinkers of the nineteenth century, with Kant as their starting-point, have pursued; I mention Schopenhauer, Beneke, Lotze, Wundt. In conformity with these thinkers I should

turn the procedure of metaphysics into more empirical and psychological channels." This statement Paulsen modifies later on in telling us that in religious faith we have to do not with the decision of an arbitrary will, but of a universal and necessary will, the practical reason. The religious hypothesis, Paulsen proceeds, which asserts 'the ultimate ground of all reality is the good will,' does not then rest on proof, but on faith, and the grounds for belief in this assertion lie in the fact that it is 'a necessary condition of our necessary will attitudes,' and may therefore be assumed to be true. This defense of religious belief Paulsen claims to be superior to any defense of the assumption of the presuppositions in the theoretical sphere, for the reason that the practical tasks and values are the higher tasks and values, since it is true that a man's value is determined by his morality. This practical justification of faith is held by Paulsen to furnish evidence not only for the validity of religious belief, but incidentally also for the impossibility of demonstrating the truth of religion theoretically. Nevertheless, this practical justification is said to be susceptible of the reception of a sort of 'theoretical substructure' through the science of psychology. "I mean," says Paulsen, "it is possible to show that side by side with the practical necessity of faith there is its psychological inevitability, which is in truth evidenced by the historical fact that the will, the essential will, always does determine belief and *Weltanschauung*."<sup>1</sup> Here we find Paulsen setting up as an ideal what James appears to have carried out, namely, the psychological foundation of a standpoint accepted on other grounds. Paulsen even indicates the special theories already known to us through James: that of knowledge as an instrument in the struggle for survival, and that of the will as a guide to the apperceptive processes, inasmuch as interest directs apperception and hence determines the elements out of which *Weltanschauungen* are constructed. Finally, too, a slight suggestion of the theory of judgment and belief is contained in Paulsen's remarks on the law of identity. This law, he says, expresses no assertion or 'indicative' (Paulsen uses the terminology of the traditional theory of judgment), but rather an 'imperative.' "*A-A* means, accordingly: that which I have posited as *A* shall be and shall remain *A*." The same holds good for the assertion of causality: I consent to the assumption of lawfulness through an act of will, because such a conception of reality as lawfulness represents, is purposive and helps toward the preservation of life. "But if these be the conditions," Paulsen concludes, "if thought and knowledge are in the last analysis determined by the will, then it is inconceivable that the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

intellect should turn against the will and force it to views that are antagonistic to its very nature." Indeed, it is impossible for any man to believe that which is incompatible with the dictates of his will. His *Weltanschauung* will always be the valuation of life dependent on his volitional nature, and only that *Weltanschauung* is fit to be believed which admits of faith in God and in the supremacy of the good.

This, in brief, is Paulsen's doctrine. Its starting-point is the theory that a man's *Weltanschauung* is the product of his willing, evaluating and believing nature, and leads to the religious hypothesis as necessary for this side of his nature. The religious hypothesis, because of this practical necessity, and because of the further fact that it asserts nothing incompatible with the intellect, is justified.

Here we have, as was said above, a complete separation of will and intellect, with no further elucidation of their relation; the will produces the conception of the world, but as final judge (at least negative judge) the intellect steps in, inasmuch as it may deny whatever conflicts with its views. Philosophy would thus seem to be supplementary to science, with a right to function only when science can reach no conclusions.

But this interpretation of Paulsen's standpoint is inconsistent with his further explanations, in which he favors a scientific procedure for metaphysics and again divorces religion and philosophy. Here we find a more precisely formulated relation between philosophy, knowledge and religion. Philosophy is knowledge, and leads to a conception of the world in its totality; religion is faith, and gives this conception a certain coloring, by taking into account the demands of the will. The *Weltanschauung* arrived at metaphysically is knowledge, for it rests on demonstrable empirical facts derivable from the special sciences. According to Paulsen, such a *Weltanschauung* leads to the belief—in the sense of knowledge—that the ultimate basis of reality lies in one undivided will—and the religious stamp it receives is the belief that this will is a good will, a divine will. This, he says, is not knowledge, but faith; for it is not a demonstrable fact, but an assumption made by the will in the interests of the good will.

In this second formulation the point of view is completely changed. Philosophy or knowledge is adequate for the formation of a *Weltanschauung*. There is no need or place for faith within the province of metaphysics. Faith is absolute only in the religious sphere, for here the world is to be interpreted according to practical ethical ideals. This is the work of the will, and such a world is

believed in because it guarantees the most valuable interests and develops the most ideal character. Philosophy, then, can fulfill its task of rationalizing the world without the help of faith. The will is of importance for one's religious interests exclusively, and in this sphere of conduct alone faith is a necessary assumption.

The two faculties are again divorced; knowledge is the concern of philosophy and metaphysics aspiring to a conception of the world, whereas in the first formulation philosophy was not knowledge, but a construction of the individual philosopher, in accordance with his individual beliefs. In the first formulation, moreover, the religious conception of the universe was said to be the most satisfying conception produced by philosophy because, without antagonizing the intellect, it conformed to the demands of the will. In this second formulation, the religious conception of the world is again proclaimed to be the most satisfying because of its ethical importance, but now it can no longer antagonize the intellect because it is not a matter with which the intellect concerns itself; it is founded not on knowledge, but on faith, and has validity exclusively for the ethical, the willing and acting individual.

However, even this second formulation is not the final—or, I should say, the chronologically final—formulation; a third and again essentially different standpoint grows out of Paulsen's further considerations of the question. This latest standpoint is foreshadowed in the assertion that the justification of religious faith on the basis of its validity for the ethical and active man is as good a justification, nay, even a better one, than the analogous justification of the presuppositions of science, for the reason that the voluntary attitudes and interests are higher and more valuable than those of knowledge. The foundation of this standpoint is furnished by the psychological theories mentioned above, which were to serve as a 'theoretical substructure' to religious faith, heretofore considered by Paulsen theoretically undemonstrable. The argument purposes to show that the will, and thereby faith, always (even in the case of metaphysics) determine one's views, inasmuch as knowledge itself is dependent on the will; first, because the intellect itself was produced by the will as an instrument for the preservation of life; secondly, because apperception, and therefore the material for philosophical thought, are guided by the will; and thirdly, because the presuppositions of knowledge (such as the law of identity) are posited by the will. Therefore, says Paulsen, *every standpoint whatever* rests upon assumptions accepted on faith: even that of pure agnosticism makes the assumption of the existence of truth itself and of theoretically

demonstrable knowledge as the only method for attaining to truth.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we have still another relation of knowledge to faith in this latest formulation. Will, because actually determining and evaluating the world and life, may justly subordinate knowledge to itself, may lead, direct and judge it. Truth means that which is satisfying to the willing attitudes of man, and as religious faith is so to a superlative degree, religious faith is superlatively true. Where the sphere of knowledge lies, and why demonstrable truth is of any value, we do not learn. The most interesting point in this third formulation is the fact that Paulsen reaches his standpoint by empirically scientific psychological considerations.

These three distinct points of view in regard to the relation of will and intellect are approximately those pointed out by Rickert. First, we have the subordination of the will to the intellect: one is justified in believing freely where he can not know. In the matter of a conception of the world one can know nothing with certainty, hence one may believe what one wishes, providing the objects of faith do not conflict with the intellect. Secondly, we have the divorce of will and intellect, so that there result two unrelated worlds, the world of knowledge for the truth-seeking man and the world of faith for the acting man. Thirdly, we have an attempt to overcome this dualism of two unrelated worlds by means of a deeper insight into the nature of knowledge itself, and by the disclosure of its practical factors. Faith or belief is here asserted to be at the basis of all conviction. However, in Paulsen's case even this third standpoint is not unequivocal. He constantly speaks of the determination of knowledge through the will. Now one can very well hold that belief is always and in all cases determined by the will, and yet conceive will and knowledge to be separable and distinct, in that the will may be thought of as a faculty which is moved and influenced by another faculty. And this is certainly what Paulsen appears to hold. Thus even his attempt to reconcile will and intellect is based on a dualistic conception of their relation; a conception to be criticized later on in our consideration of James's views on the subject.

It must be apparent that Paulsen's and James's standpoints show a certain amount of similarity. But Paulsen's predominating tendency is, after all, to reserve for the intellect the functions of producing a *Weltanschauung*, and for the will the function of modifying, supplementing and coloring this philosophical conception conformably to the will side of man's nature, but never in contradiction to the affirmations of the intellect. The religious hypothesis may

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 34. Paulsen here refers to James's 'Will to Believe' as an amplification of these thoughts.



be assumed to be true, first of all because it does not collide with the metaphysical hypothesis and only in the second place because it guarantees certain ethical interests and is essential to the practical life. Against this standpoint the charge of pseudo-voluntarism formulated above is directed with every right, and the fact that there are suggestions of contrary views in Paulsen is no argument against this criticism, but only a proof of his inconsistency. In Paulsen's case, such inconsistency may be ascribed to the fact that he has attempted no foundation of his standpoint, but in James's case there is inconsistency in spite of a detailed foundation; for in his doctrine the tendency to divorce faith and knowledge is strong, to be sure, but yet the opposite tendency to overcome this dualism through the identification of will and knowledge is, after all, the very basis and foundation of his whole doctrine.

James, too, starts with a coordinated will and intellect, for, as we know, according to his theory, the rationalization of the world proceeds in the interest of the practical as well as the theoretical needs of man. The intellect is to be satisfied in the first place, and only when knowledge fails to grasp the world in its totality does faith or practical belief find its place as a means toward the rationalization of the world. Here there is the old dualism between demonstrable knowledge and faith in the sense of undemonstrable conviction. In the final formulation of the 'thesis' according to which a problematic attitude may be abandoned in favor of voluntary belief, this dualism is especially strong; and, finally, how else can the many limitations put upon the function of faith be understood unless we suppose the intellect to be absolutely authoritative wherever it is in a position to come to a decision? Indeed, are we not told that the intellect is authoritative even in cases where it can not come to a decision, and the decision is not important for the practical man? Therefore faith, or free belief, is in order only when a decision important for man as a practical being can not be reached on logical grounds. In other words, there is logical theoretical truth, and side by side with it there is moral conviction, but the latter may never contradict the former, and plays no rôle so long as we are within the field of scientific knowledge.

James has sought to overcome this dualism in two ways. One way is the one with which we have become acquainted in that portion of Paulsen's doctrine which we called his third standpoint. James differs from Paulsen only in the far greater explicitness and clearness with which he grounds his thoughts. To be sure, the biological-genetic consideration of the origin of knowledge and its methods—a



point of view generally approved and most interestingly applied to physiological questions by James—can not here be taken into consideration, because we are concerned not with the question of the origin of knowledge, but with the question of the validity of faith compared with that of certain knowledge. These historical considerations, however, seem to take a turn toward epistemology in a variety of pragmatic doctrine which James appears to espouse in 'The Varieties of Religious Experience.' We learn there that no fact is real unless it shows real effects in action, and that truth is that which in a general way works well. But in James's case this pragmatic conception of the relation of theory and practise can not be regarded as a solution of his problem, and for two reasons. In the first place, he has failed to give any foundation to these assertions, and surely the definition of the real as that which shows real effects, being a definition in which the predicate contains the concept to be defined, calls for some further explanation. Likewise in the assertion that the true is that which in a general way works well; what are we to understand by the 'well'; what test is to be applied in order to judge of truth—that of efficiency—utility—morality? But the vagueness of the pragmatic standpoint as here formulated by James does not need to trouble us, for in spite of his claim to have adopted the pragmatic point of view by applying it to the criticism of religious facts, James did not really do so, as the following passages would seem to show conclusively: "Taking creeds and faith-state together as forming 'religions,' and treating these as purely subjective phenomena, without regard to the question of their 'truth,' we are obliged, on account of their extraordinary influence upon action and endurance, to class them amongst the most important biological functions of mankind. . . .

"At this purely subjective rating, therefore, religion must be considered vindicated in a certain way from the attacks of her critics. It would seem that she can not be a mere anachronism and survival, but must exert a permanent function whether she be with or without intellectual content, and whether, if she have any, it be true or false.

"We must next pass beyond the point of view of merely subjective utility, and make inquiry into the intellectual content itself."<sup>1</sup>

James then considers what this nucleus of intellectual content, empirically common to all religious assertions, is; he finds it to consist in certain beliefs, in regard to which he writes: "So far, however, as this analysis goes, the experiences are only psychological phenomena. They possess, it is true, enormous biological worth. Spiritual strength really increases in the subject when he has them,

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 506-507.

a new life opens for him, and they seem to him a place of conflux where the forces of two universes meet; and yet this may be nothing but his subjective way of feeling things, a mood of his own fancy, in spite of the effect produced. I now turn to my second question: What is the objective 'truth' of their content? . . . The word 'truth' is here taken to mean something additional to bare value for life, although the natural propensity of man is to believe that whatever has great value for life is thereby certified as true."

The tests which James applies for discovering the 'truth' of these practically effective and useful beliefs are, first, once more the empirical test of actual universality—he looks for 'a common body of doctrine'; and secondly, its ability to be formulated in terms 'to which physical science need not object.' "This [a science of religion] might adopt as her own reconciling hypothesis and recommend it for general belief. . . . Who says 'hypothesis' renounces the ambition to be coercive in his arguments. The most I can do is, accordingly, to offer something that may fit the facts so easily that your scientific logic will find no plausible pretext for vetoing your impulse to welcome it as true."<sup>1</sup>

Here evidently practical effectiveness is not only not conceived as the essence of reality or the test of truth, but theoretical truth and practical utility are conceived as absolutely discreet: James has effected no reconciliation whatsoever between them.

Another argument from what may be called the logical point of view is contained in the theory that all knowledge, even demonstrable and certain knowledge, rests on 'postulates,' that is, on undemonstrable belief; and in this theory we have indeed a real attempt to overthrow 'intellectualism.' As we saw, Paulsen cited James in support of this argumentation, and we know with what justice. Besides James, Royce only has come out so emphatically for this standpoint. Royce as well as James emphasizes the thought that as theoretical knowledge itself is constantly working with 'postulates,' and rests on 'postulates,' practical faith surely may and must do the same. In other words, that faith has the same certainty as theoretical knowledge, inasmuch as the latter in the last analysis rests on faith. Science itself is founded on 'postulates'; on that of the uniformity of natural law, for instance. The scientist believes in theoretical rationality, why should he not believe in moral or practical rationality? The scientist believes in truth and in the possibility of attaining it, and finally, does he not believe his methods to be the only means to this end? But all these assumptions are mere 'postulates.'

So far it would seem that a solution of our problem had in truth

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 511.

been found. All so-called theoretical knowledge rests in the last analysis on faith, in that one can not do any scientific thinking at all without presupposing definite 'postulates.' If these postulates contain the principle of certainty, it must be reflected by them on knowledge. But do these postulates contain such a principle of certainty? Is this faith truly knowledge? In short—how are these postulates conceived?

We know that according to James they are, so to say, dogmatic articles of faith; truth and the possibility of attaining to it are articles to which as dogmatists we voluntarily subscribe, whereas the skeptics reject them. At the same time, being empiricists, we must admit that all our truths (the objects of our belief) may at any moment be corrected or overthrown, and that we can, therefore, never know whether we are actually in possession of the truth. Absolute objective evidence and absolute certainty do not exist, then, for the consistent empiricist; yet he accepts as a practical criterion of truth the confirmation a fact receives from the total stream of thought. But if absolute certainty does not exist, James certainly can not claim it for his dogmatic articles of faith: truth and knowledge. So that if there be any reconciliation of faith and belief in the foregoing standpoint, it is effected in this way: they are equally uncertain, for knowledge itself and its goal, truth, are mere postulates. To be sure, not even this standpoint is held to consistently, for, as we saw, a valid test of truth was subsequently introduced in the confirmation of a fact by the total drift of thought, and objective proof was recommended as a means of verification, where no real option in James's sense was involved. Objective evidence is, in fact, called 'coercive' evidence, and is said to be the nearest approach there is to certainty, but unfortunately it is at the same time a method of verification for which as practical men we can not always afford to wait.

Herewith we are back again at the old dualism of knowledge and 'mere' faith. Faith is less certain than knowledge, in spite of being the basis upon which knowledge rests.

In the case of Royce, with whom James claims to agree, the matter is simpler.<sup>1</sup> His definition of a postulate indicates the degree of certainty that he ascribes to it. "A postulate," he writes, "is a mental way of behavior." Postulates are voluntary assumptions of a risk. The way to adopt the postulate is to 'voluntarily determine to act in a given way, not being rationally forced to do so, and well knowing the risk.' For, 'in general, to believe that a thing exists is to act as if a thing existed.' The reason for making assumptions

<sup>1</sup> Josiah Royce, 'The Religious Aspect of Philosophy,' Chapter IX., p. 291 ff. Boston, 1897.

connected with a risk, is for the sake of a 'higher end.' Scientific laws are postulates of this kind, and the religious hypothesis may perhaps be regarded as a practical, unavoidable postulate; not certain, to be sure, but assumed at a risk. This standpoint requires no criticism. It is evident that we have no certainty here and Royce himself admits this in writing: "These postulates must be confirmed if possible, and subordinated to higher results. . . . We have seen how postulates, theoretically uncertain, but practically worth the risk, are at the foundation of our whole lives. Hereafter we shall seek to dig beneath these foundations for that other sort of theoretical certainty. . . . After all, is not this business of postulating into the void a dangerous one? Is it not a hollow and empty activity, this, if we really reflect upon it? Courage indeed we must have; but is religion no more than courage? Nay; we must have, if possible, some eternal truth, that is not our postulate, to rest upon. . . . And may there not be some higher relation of our lives to that truth—such a relation that the truth shall be neither the arbitrary product of our subjective postulates, nor a dead external reality such as was the world of doubt?"<sup>1</sup> Although this theory is not identical with James's, it can not be denied that James as well as Royce so conceives the 'postulate' that its validity lies in its relation to some purpose it serves rather than in the conviction it carries with it. In considerations such as these religious faith remains 'mere' faith, and the attempt to prove that knowledge rests on faith does not confer greater certainty upon faith, but only deprives knowledge of its certainty.<sup>2</sup>

Enough has been said to show that if the train of thought just presented is to be accepted as the one most conformable to the 'total drift' of James's thought, he proves to be a strange skeptic—one who defends religious faith for the reason that we mortals can attain no absolute certainty and are therefore privileged to believe as we will. In thus denying the certainty of knowledge and truth, James can not, to be sure, be refuted; neither does he need to be refuted, because he can not consistently claim to be uttering a truth.

It seems to me, however, that James's most characteristic theory is his theory of judgment, and that in it we have a much deeper and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> This doctrine differs *in toto* from those which, while basing demonstrable knowledge on undemonstrable faith, claim absolute certainty for the content of faith. So, for instance, Jacobi, for whom faith, though indeed undemonstrable, is nevertheless the most certain of all knowledge; in fact, the immediate evidence and revelation of reality. Compare Kuno Fischer, 'Geschichte der neueren Philosophie,' 6, p. 104, Heidelberg, 1900; also Windelband, 'Geschichte der neueren Philosophie,' p. 242, Leipzig, 1899.

more thoroughgoing attempt to overcome the one-sidedness of intellectualism. Here a real attempt appears to be made to find a principle of certainty for faith through the transformation of the conception of knowledge.

This theory of judgment, as has been said, may be regarded as an amplification of the suggestions found in Paulsen's third formulation concerning the relation of the processes of apperception to the will. As we know, in his theory of judgment, James adduces the truth that all cognition is in essence belief, because the practical attitude of the will is the essential thing in judgment. Therefore, though the term knowledge in the narrower sense may be reserved for cognition resting on perceptual evidence, this knowledge, too, is in essence belief. But belief is the 'function of cognizing reality'; it is the affirmation of the reality of objects and of the truth of propositions. Immediate conviction or faith is the final court of appeal—the final and only evidence of reality and truth. Only if affirmed and believed does an object become true and real. Now this affirmation is, as we know, volitional in nature, it is the same psychological attitude toward an object as that which we term will. And as both will and belief resolve themselves upon analysis into volitional attention, a total identification of cognition and will is effected. From the further fact that both in the act of judgment and of will we are *free to choose* our experience and our reality, it follows that in some cases this free choice of a belief makes possible the realization of its content: so in the case of the religious hypothesis. Therefore we may say: Let us freely elect to believe in a moral world-order; for through acting on that belief we realize and make true a moral world-order.

We are now ready for the question: Is this identification of will and belief really a refutation of intellectualism; are faith and knowledge harmonized through the reduction of the certainty of knowledge to the certainty of faith? This is not only not the case, but upon a closer examination of this defense of the freedom of belief on the grounds of the identity of belief and will, it becomes evident that this identification itself, and indeed James's very conception of the will, reintroduce free belief or faith as the logical contrary of certain knowledge. The following analysis will make evident the truth of this statement.

The essential act of will, the psychic attitude which is said to be identical with belief, is the 'fiat' which is pronounced when a choice must be made between several ideas simultaneously present in the mind. This fiat is expressed in the form of attention with effort. Choice of an idea and voluntary attention are, therefore, one and the same act. We know, however, that according to

James, voluntary attention—or free will—is always ‘derived.’ “We never make an effort to attend to an object except for the sake of some remote interest the effort will serve.” Indeed, in the very conception of a conscious choice, a principle of choice is involved: I can not consciously make a choice without being motivated, any more than I can act purposively without having a purpose. In other words, voluntary attention is motivated; and as voluntary attention and belief are one and the same fact, belief is determined by outside factors. When I consent, affirm, choose or believe, in the face of the possibility of rejection or doubt, what, then, guides my decision in the case of *freely* chosen belief?

We know that in the case of involuntary attention, unconscious will, impulse or whatever we wish to call this psychological process, the attention is captured by those ideas which have the quality of arousing interest. In James’s phrase, the impulsive strength of an idea lies in its power to excite interest. We react on that which is practically interesting to us, by giving it attention—thus it becomes our reality. The important point here is the fact that James concedes no activity to this involuntary attention; it is effected from the outside and is passive, caused, therefore, not free.

The active free will functions only when the natural reaction of the attention is to be influenced, changed and guided; only when a conscious choice is to be made. Only then do we rightly speak of free will; and it is a free will of this character which forms, as has been shown, the basis of James’s defense of religious belief. If, then, the fiat intervenes in the natural process in a way so that the attention is guided to an idea which in itself does not excite it, this fiat must itself be guided or determined by some motives or reasons. I consent to, agree to and choose a belief, but why? No explicit answer to this question can be found in James’s teaching; and naturally enough, for does he not conceive of freedom as indeterminism?

Herewith we have encountered an inconsistency, than which a greater one can not be imagined, within the boundaries of James’s theory of the will. His explicit doctrine of freedom teaches that freedom is dependent on the possibility of putting forth an indeterminate amount of effort of attention or consent. Freedom of will means that attention is indeterminate in quality and direction, and this again means that effort of attention is not effect, not result of a fixed function of the object, but that, given a constant object, more or less effort may be made: it is an independent variable. Certainly this effort “appears to us indeterminate, and as if, even with an unchanging object, we might make more or less, as we choose.

If it be really indeterminate, our future acts are ambiguous or unpredestinate: in common parlance, *our wills are free.*'<sup>1</sup>

It is not our intention to criticize the validity of this conception of freedom as such;<sup>2</sup> we wish to show, rather, that the possibility of freedom as above defined is inconsistent with James's psychological theory of the will, according to which the essence of volitional acts manifests itself only where a choice is to be made between mutually antagonistic ideas, and where this choice is a conscious and deliberate one. Only when a struggle between such antagonistic ideas must be settled, is effort called for, and the will involved; only in choice is the will *free*. But obviously such attention with effort must not only be motivated, but, moreover, wherever it is involved and the will consciously chooses an idea in order to make it prevail, there a definite principle of choice is involved, and the will is not and can not logically be conceived to be indeterminate in any direction. Applying this argument to the activity of judgment, belief or consent, we must recognize that here, too, we are motivated and determined in our choice; in other words, if we consciously will to believe, we choose one belief rather than another for some definite reason. Therefore the act of consent or belief itself is not the final ground for choice; in the case of a freely adopted belief, the freely chosen idea and its 'certainty' rest not upon the belief it awakens, but upon some further facts which have acted as determinants in the choice, on the part of the self, of this particular belief.

Therefore it can no longer be claimed that faith and knowledge are identical, because in the last analysis they both resolve themselves into will, for we see that in the very conception of free will and free belief there lies fully developed a dualism between the practical active factor, the voluntry fiat, and its guiding principle, the conscious choice. The principle of certainty is no longer contained in immediate conviction or belief itself, but in the determinants of belief. It must depend on the nature of these latter factors whether or not certainty is conferred on belief.

Here it will suggest itself to the reader that this might well be the point of departure for the doctrine which conceives the freedom of will and belief to consist in their voluntary obedience to the norm; a doctrine whose best formulation may be found in Windelband's 'Præludien.' From this point of view thought is free when motivated by the will for truth, and guided by normative laws leading to

<sup>1</sup> 'Psychology,' Vol. II., p. 571.

<sup>2</sup> For a brief refutation of the theory of freedom as indeterminism, see W. Windelband, 'Præludien,' Freiburg and Tübingen, 1884, especially 'Normen und Naturgesetze'; also A. Riehl, 'Der philosophische Kriticismus,' II., p. 216.



truth, and just because judgment or belief subordinates itself to the value of truth, it is here considered a practical or volitional attitude. As a matter of fact, however, there are no traces of such a theory in James's teaching. If we seek for the determining motives of his free belief or will to believe, we will find no elucidation in the chapter on 'The Perception of Reality,' but are here referred to the theory of will, with the remark that everything said concerning the freedom of will is valid for belief. But in his theory of will, James, as we know, comes out in favor of indeterminism. We are therefore left to search his religious philosophy for a statement of what we ought to consider the motives for willing to believe, or free choice in belief.

As we have seen, the content of the religious hypothesis is said to belong to that group of phenomena whose realization depends on man's attitude toward them. It lies in his hands entirely whether or not the religious world-order will be realized. His conduct is the determining factor. But this conduct in turn is determined by his mental attitude: only if inspired by belief in the religious hypothesis will his conduct be such as to realize the religious hypothesis. If, then, he decides to adopt religious belief, he is determined neither by the reality of the religious world-order nor by the truth of the religious hypothesis, for prior to his belief they are neither real nor true. Rather is he determined to affirm and believe religiously as a means to the end of realizing a state of affairs which gives satisfaction to his practical needs. Belief here is not the function of cognizing reality or recognizing truth, but 'I believe' is correctly paraphrased by 'Something ought from a moral point of view to be, and therefore I assume that it is.'

Once more we are back in the 'postulate' theory. Belief in the not yet real moral and religious world-order is not cognition of the truth of the religious hypothesis and can not, therefore, claim any certainty whatsoever, if we continue to attach any meaning to the word certainty; it is rather an assumption made at a risk, and expresses a readiness to act on the assumption for the sake of the end to which the action may lead.

The identification of the volitional and judging processes, and the freedom of belief logically deduced from this identification, which was to serve as a basis for the defense of religious belief, have failed in their object. The free belief which the realization of the religious hypothesis calls for, is of an essentially different nature from that belief which we have seen to be involved in the act of judgment and to form the essence of all knowledge. Such belief



conceptually includes reality as its object, and was defined by James as the function of cognizing reality or truth. If the freely chosen or free belief of the religious hypothesis is justified, then, for the reason that all knowledge is in essence belief, this justification, in conceptually separating knowledge from reality and truth, deprives knowledge of all meaning. Religious faith is indeed justified, but at the expense of knowledge. We are told: You may affirm a thing without holding it to be true.

To sum up the conclusions reached by this analysis: First, we have seen that James continually vacillates between a coordination and an identification of will and intellect, faith and knowledge. Secondly, that his identification and the conclusions drawn from it, which were to serve as a basis for the justification of religious faith, in that they victoriously overcame the dualism of faith and knowledge, either leave this dualism unadjusted or else adjust it at the cost of knowledge itself. In other words: I must either coordinate knowledge and faith and count the religious world-order among the objects of faith, concerning whose reality I can pass no judgment claiming to be true (and this is a dualistic standpoint at which no philosophy can stop, and which James tried to adjust); or else, I may claim to be justified in affirming the religious hypothesis, and in this case I affirm a fact without holding it to be real or true, and thereby destroy the conception of knowledge as thought related to objective reality. The charge that James's defense of religious faith sacrifices the possibility of knowledge seems to be established.

And yet a way out of this dilemma discloses itself. James's justification on the basis of his theory of judgment failed for the reason that the free belief of the religious hypothesis proved to be no affirmation of reality or truth, whereas the belief at the basis of all cognition was, according to James's theory, the function of cognizing reality. If, now, it should prove that another and different conception of belief, knowledge and reality is, after all, characteristic for James, it might still be possible that this belief, which can be freely adopted or willed, could be shown to be the essence of all judgment and knowledge. Indeed, that part of his theory of judgment which asserts that all belief is a choice on the part of the practical ego, with its practical needs and desires, and that 'reality' is but the sum total of what is chosen or believed—this seems to point directly to freely willed belief or free belief as the kernel of all knowledge, and the fountain of all reality. Now the question whether James can defend such an epistemological standpoint consistently with his psychological theory of judgment, is the identical question which must be answered in connection with the charge of

subjectivism. We must, therefore, reserve judgment on this question until the end of the next chapter, when it will become evident whether James's epistemological standpoint opens a path of escape from the dilemma with which we are confronted. If our answer should be negative, our next duty will be to analyze the nature of this freely willed belief advocated for the religious hypothesis. So far this free belief has been described only negatively. It is, as we know, no form of cognition, has no validity as knowledge, and *is not determined by a will for truth*. Its positive nature will become apparent at the end of the analysis in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER IV

### JAMES'S DOCTRINE AS A DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS FAITH AT THE COST OF OBJECTIVE REALITY

The epistemological presuppositions for the subjectivism of a theory of free belief—The epistemological presuppositions of the 'psychology of belief'—The individuality of James's theory of judgment—The epistemological presuppositions of James's theory of judgment—The importance of these facts for James's solution of the problem of the overthrow of intellectualism—Positive evaluation of the will to believe as a basis for the defense of religious faith, and summary.

At the beginning of the last section we indicated why the charge of subjectivism, such as Miller, for instance, brought against James, could not be upheld without further proof. The charge, namely, based on the fact that as judgments in order to be true must correspond to some independent reality, the will to believe or free belief according to wish might indeed exist as a will to deceive oneself, but could have nothing in common with a will for truth. This criticism would be self-evidently just, if James were obliged to admit that this presupposition is correct, namely, that judgment or belief must correspond with objective reality in order to be true. The truth of this presupposition is not, however, acknowledged by James. On the contrary, his theory points to the conclusion that no such objective reality can be posited; that reality is nothing other than the sum total of what the mind wills and affirms, and that no fact is real until the mind performs the act of relating it to itself. If such be the case, the charge of subjectivism in the form before us becomes untenable. Our question is, therefore, Must James, if consistent, acknowledge the presupposition on which the charge is founded, or has he carried out his theory of belief in such a way that it makes possible an epistemological standpoint which the charge does not touch?

In order to answer this question, we shall first of all analyze the characteristic and peculiar traits of James's theory of judgment. We shall then be able to see whether this theory is indeed fitted to support an epistemological structure which can escape the charge of subjectivism, for the reason that this charge is tenable only on the presupposition of a contrary epistemological standpoint. The best method for presenting the individual and peculiar features of

James's theory is to compare it with other related theories. The following short preliminary survey of such theories is therefore adjoined.

James's theory, and those related to it, may be comprised under the conception and term 'psychology of belief,' inasmuch as the psychological examination into the state of mind, belief (conceived as the kernel of cognition), is their common task. The psychologists who interest us most in this connection are Hume, the two Mills, Bain, Sully, Stout and Baldwin.

Hume, who first agitated the question of the nature of belief as an original psychic phenomenon, may be considered the pioneer in the endeavor to find its answer. And although Hume did not quite succeed in formulating a satisfactory answer to his question,<sup>1</sup> he did succeed in formulating the essential points in the problem of belief in a way which still obtains in modern psychology, and which is strictly adhered to in James's theory of belief.

Hume's own answer to the questions of the essence of belief and of its causes and conditions and of its relation to other mental phenomena, is as follows:<sup>2</sup> Belief must be differentiated from conception, because 'we conceive many things which we do not believe.' Yet belief in the existence of an object is not a new idea added to the original conception of the object. For when we conceive of God, on the one hand, and when we conceive of Him as existing, and believe in His existence, on the other, our idea of Him neither increases nor diminishes. "But as 'tis certain there is a great difference betwixt the simple conception of an object and the belief in it, and as this difference lies not in the parts or composition of the idea which we conceive, it follows that it must lie in the *manner* in which we conceive it. . . . But when I would explain this *manner*, I scarce find any words that fully answer the case, but am obliged to have recourse to every one's feeling in order to give him a perfect notion of this operation of the mind. An idea assented to *feels* different from a fictitious idea that the fancy alone presents to us: and this different feeling I endeavor to explain by calling it a superior *force*, or *vivacity*, or *solidity*, or *firmness*, or *steadiness*." Philosophically, then, we must content ourselves with the statement that belief is a something felt by the mind which confers on ideas greater force, greater importance and greater stability and renders them the

<sup>1</sup> See Theodor Lipps, 'Treatise on Human Nature,' translated by Lipps ('Traktat über die menschliche Natur,' Hamburg and Leipzig, 1895), p. 356, foot-note, 334.

<sup>2</sup> 'Treatise on Human Nature,' Part III., Section 7 ff., Ed. Green & Grosse, London, 1886.

governing principle of all our actions. In searching for the causes of belief, Hume searches for the conditions of lively and vivid ideas, thereby inconsistently identifying the lively idea itself with the lively manner of conceiving it, in which he had previously found the essence of belief to consist. He set up the maxim 'that when any impression becomes present to us, it not only transports the mind to such ideas as are related to it, but likewise communicates to them a share of its force and vivacity.' Especially the relations of causality, resemblance, and temporal and spatial contiguity lend this preeminent vividness to associated ideas, that is, awaken belief in their reality. In regard to the relation of belief to other states of consciousness, Hume reaches the following conclusions:<sup>1</sup> Belief is not a special attitude annexed to the conception, in the manner that will and desire are. Belief is not distinguishable from the conception, but is merely a peculiar feeling accompanying a firm manner of conception, and a fast hold on the object. In reference to this theory, Lipps remarks that the distinction Hume makes is not a clear one, and that a more searching examination would no doubt have made Hume realize and admit that belief and will are indeed analogous attitudes toward objects.<sup>2</sup> To us this seems extremely doubtful, however, as Hume has expressed himself quite definitely on the subject of the relation of belief and will on the occasion of a second definition of belief in the appendix. Here the conclusion that belief can not be an idea is deduced from two facts, the one, that we have no abstract idea of existence separable from the idea of particular objects, and the other—and this is the point in question—that the mind has command over its ideas, and that, therefore, if 'belief consisted merely in a new idea . . . it would be in a man's power to believe what he pleased.' As belief, however, 'depends not on the will, but must arise from certain determinate causes and principles of which we are not masters, it must be a feeling or sentiment.'

How has the problem of belief developed since Hume? That belief is conceived as consciousness of reality or truth, over against mere conception, is of course the logical condition of its examination, for only as a unique mental attitude does belief become a problem. But although the psychologists mentioned above agree with Hume in considering this reality-consciousness a non-intellectual or non-conceptual state of consciousness, they differ widely in their positive definitions of its nature.

John Stuart Mill in a frequently cited passage expresses the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, appendix.

<sup>2</sup> Lipps's translation, p. 356, foot-note 334.

theory that belief is not analyzable, because it is an 'ultimate and primordial' fact, which is joined in every act of judgment to the intellectual combination of ideas contained therein.<sup>1</sup> In another place he says:<sup>2</sup> "To determine what it is that happens in the case of assent or dissent besides putting two ideas together, is one of the most intricate of metaphysical problems." Searching for the conditions of belief, he finds that we believe in the first place all that is sense-given, and then, all that is associated with the sense-given.

Bain, on the other hand, regards as the essence of belief readiness to act, and accordingly defines belief as that upon which we are willing to act.<sup>3</sup> That this is a description of the results of belief rather than of the nature of belief is self-evident. A similar confusion may be found in the theories of James Mill<sup>4</sup> and of Herbert Spencer,<sup>5</sup> which define belief as 'indissoluble' or 'inseparable association'; whereas, logically, association can be conceived only as the cause or condition of belief.

Sully endeavors to gain as comprehensive a conception of belief as is possible, by including in his definition all the factors above mentioned. Its intellectual aspect is the reference of thought beyond itself to a real object, its representativeness. Hume's conception of belief as feeling is also recognized, but interpreted to mean that we must feel interested in a thing in order to feel convinced of it. Finally, too, Bain's so-called conative element (readiness to act) is adopted and incorporated into Sully's definition. In his analysis of the conditions of belief, Sully finds that vivid, coherent and stable concepts are believed because they approach sense-perception in vividness, and, therefore, assume the form of representatives of reality, reality meaning an object existent in the external world.<sup>6</sup>

In the more recent theories of Baldwin and Stout we find belief again explicitly defined as feeling. Baldwin, to be sure, distinguishes between simple reality-feeling, and belief as the feeling of assent and confirmation; both, however, are feelings. The former

<sup>1</sup> Note to the 'Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind,' by James Mill, 2d Edition, I., p. 412.

<sup>2</sup> 'System of Logic,' Book I, Chapter V.

<sup>3</sup> 'Mental and Moral Science,' 3d Ed., p. 371 ff., London, 1872. In the appendix this theory is strongly modified. Here belief is defined as an original disposition to follow a line already experienced and to expect the same result. This conception of belief is described by Bain as an 'intellectual one'; in regard to its strength, however, belief is said to be dependent on conative and emotional impulses.

<sup>4</sup> 'Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind,' Chapter 11.

<sup>5</sup> 'Principles of Psychology,' London and Edinburgh, 1870.

<sup>6</sup> 'Outlines of Psychology,' p. 397 ff., London, 1889.

he describes as the simple feeling of the presence of a thing before consciousness, the mere recognition of an object; the latter as a feeling of confirmation, a consciousness of the presence of a thing as fitted to satisfy a need. In other words, 'belief is the consciousness of the personal endorsement of reality.'<sup>1</sup>

Stout, who next to James has given us the most comprehensive and complete theory of belief, adopts James's definition of belief as the mental function of cognizing reality. Doubt and disbelief are classified by him as forms of belief, for the reason that they, too, imply an 'acknowledgment of objective existence.'<sup>2</sup>

As for the conditions of belief, that is, of 'acknowledgment' of objective existence, Stout concludes after an exhaustive examination that 'the apprehension of real existence depends on the limitation of our volitional activity by the material upon which it is exercised'—volitional activity here embracing both the process of fixing attention and the movements of the body. The principle to be applied is that of the limitation of attention by the nature of the presentation attended to. Real existence essentially consists in the manifest independence and self-existence of the object in its relation to the volitional activity through which it is cognized. "To know is not to create; . . . the object as such is independent of our will."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Handbook of Psychology,' New York, 1891; 'Feeling and Will,' p. 149 ff. See also 'On Selective Thinking,' *Psychological Review*, 1898.

<sup>2</sup> 'Belief,' *Mind*, October, 1891; also 'Analytic Psychology,' Book 1, Chapter 5.

<sup>3</sup> Not very dissimilar to this theory is that of Lipps, 'Grundtatsachen des Seelenlebens,' Kap. XVII., p. 395, Bonn, 1883. He, too, conceives judging to be 'an act of consent,' and remarks: "We assent to that which presents itself with a claim for recognition" ("Wir erkennen aber an, was uns mit dem Anspruch auf Geltung entgegentritt"). As a second formulation of the concept of judgment, the following one, very similar to Baldwin's, is given: "Judgment is conception + the consciousness of reality" ("Urteilen ist Vorstellen mit dem Bewusstsein der Wirklichkeit"). Every judgment, continues Lipps, asserts reality; even the proposition 'Pegasus has wings'; here the objective reality of the psychological fact that 'Pegasus' denotes a winged creature is asserted. "But to have the consciousness of reality means to have the consciousness that an idea is necessary, must or ought to be" ("Das Bewusstsein der Wirklichkeit haben, dies heisst das Bewusstsein haben, ein Vorstellen sei nothwendig, müsse oder solle sein"). An idea is true, then, if in contrast to mere conception, it is accompanied by the feeling of necessity or 'constraint,' that is, if my power of free subjective conception when exercised on the idea arouses in me a feeling of 'vain effort.' "Thus reality-consciousness, or consciousness of validity and of objective significance, consists in a feeling of constraint or effort, or, to take them collectively, in a feeling of resistance, which is aroused in us when our free ideational process meets with a superior ideational experience" ("So be-

Belief, or the feeling of reality, then, according to Stout, arises from the obstacles offered to volitional attention by the nature of the objects to which it is turned, and from the corresponding limitations of volitional movements by material hindrances. In short, belief in reality is conditioned throughout by limitations to subjective activity.

Baldwin, too, finds an ultimate and unbridgable disparity between will and belief, and formulates it as follows: "There is a distinct difference in consciousness between the consent of belief and the consent of will. The consent of belief is in a measure a forced consent: it attaches to what *is*—to what stands in the order of things whether I consent or no. The consent of will is a forceful consent, a consent of what *shall be* through me." "It is not true, that we can believe what we will. To say we believe what we need, is not to say we believe what we want." And again he asserts, approximating Stout's position even more closely: "Sensations of resistance become the primary criterion of all external reality. Anything that resists my will is believed to have present reality."

This necessarily very cursory survey of the 'psychology of belief' makes it evident that although in detail the theories considered differ widely enough to show hardly a common point of departure, nevertheless several fundamental points of view characterize every one of the theories and form the basis on which the whole 'psychology of belief' rests.<sup>1</sup>

steht überhaupt das Wirklichkeitsbewusstsein oder Bewusstsein der Geltung und der objektiven Bedeutung in dem Gefühl des Zwanges oder der Anstrengung, oder wenn wir beides zusammenfassen, dem Gefühl des Widerstandes, dass sich dann in uns einstellt, wenn unser freier Vorstellungsverlauf einem übermächtigen Vorstellungsgeschehen begegnet").

<sup>1</sup> I have not treated Brentano's theory of judgment for two reasons. In the first place, I agree with Cornelius ('Versuch einer Theorie der Existentialurteile,' p. 82, München, 1894) in considering it identical in principle with Hume's theory of belief. In the second place, Brentano, because of his epistemological and logical interests, introduced the logical aspect of the concept of existence into his theories, which unfortunately not only complicated his problems immensely, but rendered their solution incoherent. (Compare Cornelius, *Ibid.*, p. 82 ff.)

It may also be questioned whether Professor John Dewey's psychology of belief belongs to this general class or not. But it shows so many points in common with the theories presented that some account of it seems here called for. In 'Beliefs and Realities' (*Philosophical Review*, March, 1906) we learn that the pragmatic statement of knowledge reasserts the principle of belief, conceiving belief as the kernel and the starting-point of all knowledge. In the process of inquiry called thinking, we are told, beliefs are the working hypotheses, while their systematization—their development and test—constitutes



The first of these fundamental points of view is the conception of belief as 'cognition of reality' in the sense of a conviction that the conceived idea refers to a real object, or corresponds with some reality, or however one wishes to express oneself in describing the dualistic conception of an objective world of reality and a sub-knowledge. When we ask, however, in what relation belief as inquiry stands to reality (bearing in mind that the psychology of belief presented, conceived belief as reality-feeling or conviction of truth), we get the following answer: First, that beliefs are instigated by reality, and secondly, that they are themselves real, and manifest their reality 'in the usual proper way, namely, by modifying and shaping the reality of other real things.' But this seems to tell us only that beliefs arise in the course of experience and that they in turn give rise to action which modifies the further course of experience, and an insight into their relation to reality, from which a conceptual difference between belief and error and doubt could be deduced, would seem to be possible rather when we ask, If belief is inquiry, what does it inquire into? In answer to this we learn that belief inquires into reality, but not into a fixed ready-made reality, finished for all time, to which belief as a mere subjective 'unreal' attitude would vainly try to accommodate itself. This rationalistic view of the relationship of knowledge and reality calls for revision, we are told, 'a revision which should start frankly from the fact of thinking as inquiring, and purely external realities as terms in inquiries.' It seems, then, that the pragmatic conception of belief, too, calls for reality as its term, reality so far definite that it can be described as 'external realities'; and in so far Professor Dewey would seem to be in agreement with the psychologists presented above. Obviously, however, belief as working hypothesis is conceptually different from belief as reality-feeling or acknowledgment of truth. A working hypothesis may be a guess whose degree of certainty ranges from mere possibility through all stages of probability to absolute conviction, and it seems very plausible, therefore, that, as we are told later on, 'all beliefs are willful' and that 'because the freedom of belief is ours free thought may exercise itself.' Nevertheless, I think that a consideration of what Professor Dewey gives as the actual processes of thinking and the tests of belief reduces this apparent freedom of belief to a freedom to merely *conceive* any hypothesis, and to attempt to test it; its actual ability to be tested, that is, to be systematized and developed, is strictly controlled, as is also its actual purposiveness which first gives the holder of the working hypothesis a feeling of its validity, a conviction of certainty. The control in the first direction seems to me to be contained in the following statement: "Belief, sheer, direct, unmitigated personal belief, reappears as the working hypothesis; action which at once develops and tests belief reappears as experimentation, deduction, demonstration; while the machinery of universals, axioms, *a priori* truths, etc., is the systematization of the way in which men have always worked out, in anticipation of overt action, the implications of their beliefs with a view to revising them in the interests of obviating the unfavorable, and of securing the welcome consequences. . . ." But this systematization, this development, implies a body of previous truths as its instrument to test the new hypothesis. The new hypothesis would seem to have first to connect with a body of established truths if it is to develop into that intelligent action which gives rise to further realities and is the final and supreme test of its validity. It would seem, therefore, that if systematization of a belief—the process called knowledge—is pos-

jective cognition of this objective world. Not only is such a dualistic world posited, when the question is asked: How must conceptions be constituted in order to be believed, that is, in order to be valid for the objective world?—but, moreover, this presupposed objective world to which ideas must apply in order to be true is the extra-mental world, the spatial and temporal world as given through the medium of the senses. Only on the assumption of an objective world of this sort is it possible to search for the causes of cognition and of belief. In fact, an assertion of the reality of the ‘physical’ over against the sensible only with the aid of a body of truths with which to connect the new hypothesis, the very existence of the new hypothesis is controlled. In the second direction, in that of the control of the validity of an hypothesis, it would seem as though the very fact that there are always some ‘external realities’ whether brute facts or an indefinite unformed *ὕλη* to which the hypothesis must apply and accommodate itself in order to work as a reconstructive function of other parts of experience, establishes a perfect control over the validity of working hypotheses, since ‘truth is the union of abstract postulated meanings and of concrete brute facts in a way which circumvents the latter by utilization as a means, while it fulfills the other by use as methods, in the same personally active experience.’

James himself in a recent pragmatic formulation of the thought process (‘Pragmatism’s Conception of Truth,’ *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, Vol. IV., p. 141), differing fundamentally from his elaborate psychology of belief, brings out this element of control very strongly, as the following extracts may suggest: “Truth, . . . meaning nothing but eventual verification, is manifestly incompatible with waywardness on our part. Woe to him whose beliefs play fast and loose with the order which realities follow in his experience: they will lead him nowhere or else make false connections.” “Between the coercions of the sensible order and those of the ideal order, our mind is thus wedged tightly.” “Any idea that helps us to deal with either the reality or its belongings, that doesn’t entangle our progress in frustrations, that *fits*, in fact, and adapts our life to the reality’s whole setting, will agree sufficiently to meet the requirement. It will hold true of that reality.” “We must find a theory that will *work*. . . . It must derange common sense and previous belief as little as possible, and it must lead to some sensible terminus or other that can be verified exactly. To ‘work’ means both these things; and the squeeze is so tight that there is little loose play for any theory. They are controlled as nothing is.” And finally: “Pent in, as the pragmatist, more than any one else, sees himself to be, between the whole body of funded truths squeezed from the past and the coercions of the world of sense about him, who so well as he feels the immense pressure of objective control under which our minds perform their operations?”

So it would appear that the will to believe or free belief has no place in the pragmatic account of belief and knowledge. If both doctrines be held by a thinker at one and the same time it points to his inconsistency. Inconsistencies can, however, be accounted for, partly at least, by the nature of the conflicting doctrines. A study of pragmatism with a view to its hospitality to subjective doctrines such as that of the will to believe is a tempting task, but does not, I think, call for further elucidation in connection with our own doctrine, which receives its complete foundation, as we have seen, on non-pragmatic grounds.

'psychical' is contained in the very definition of belief as consciousness of the real existence of objects contrasted with mere ideas of or conceptions of such objects. If, in addition to this, the theory is held that the 'real'—the objective world independent of the individual consciousness—is known and believed by the fact that it limits volitional attention, as Baldwin and Stout explicitly assert, then any possibility of influencing or shaping knowledge on the part of the will is precluded. The real *is*, independent of any subjective activity. True ideas are those which correspond to reality, and this correspondence is recognized by certain signs; that is, I believe, am convinced, assent to the reality of the conceived object, if the conception have certain subjective traits. Now even from this standpoint a will to believe, or freely chosen belief, although not psychologically impossible, has absolutely no validity as knowledge for which reference to an objective world independent of volitional activity is requisite. It is, indeed, a will to deceive oneself.

But if we go farther and assert that the objective world can be known only by its influence in constraining the activity of the will, then we adopt a standpoint from which will and belief are, indeed, seen to be antithetical in principle: I believe or ascribe reality and extra-mental existence to my ideas, *just because* I and my will can not control them, but are, on the contrary, controlled by them.

Now this standpoint, which is not only dualistic, but is, moreover, full of assumptions concerning the nature of reality, can hardly be objected to, for it is difficult to see how psychology could find its problems without making and resting upon these assumptions. For the essential psychological problem is that of the individual consciousness's cognition of the objective physical world, and this presupposes the world of things and of other individuals as universally valid realities. Here, in the questions regarding the nature of the cognition of the external world, the conditions of its generation and the relation of different states of consciousness, psychology finds its legitimate problems. The examination of the validity of its presuppositions is not within its own sphere. But that this is psychology's only possible basis and standpoint is generally admitted, and calls for no further comment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> James himself upholds this point of view in his remarks on the methods of psychology as a natural science ('Psychology,' Chapter VII.). He says the psychologist does not inquire into the possibility of knowledge *überhaupt*, he assumes it. "The knowledge he criticizes is the knowledge of particular men about the particular things that surround them" (p. 184). "To the psychologist the minds he studies are *objects*, in a world of other objects." These minds are always the minds of 'distinct individuals inhabiting definite portions of a real space and a real time' (p. 183).

If in view of these facts we ask ourselves not only how James came to regard a will to believe as a possible and justifiable process, but how he went so far as to identify will and belief, the only answer possible is that the epistemological assumption that the reality cognized by belief is the external objective world, is one to which James does not subscribe.

Cornelius in an interesting critique of the 'psychology of belief'<sup>1</sup> points out that there are two possible methods for a research into the conditions of belief. One may either start with a fixed definition of the real, and then deduce from it what marks our ideas must show in order to be characterized as real; or one may proceed inductively, and search for the common qualities of those ideas which are generally believed, and thus determine the nature of reality. Obviously now it is the first of these methods that the psychologists considered above have employed; whereas James attempted to carry through the second method. As we have seen, James began his examination into belief by contrasting it with 'mere' conception, and thus gained his definition of belief as the cognition of reality. When he began to search for the conditions of belief, however, he found that every conceived object is *eo ipso* believed, unless it contradicts other believed objects. Among contradictory or conflicting conceptions some one must prevail, and the function of belief was found in the task of settling the conflict by an active choice. Consent or belief thus became the subjective activity of choice. The problem therewith shaped itself in such a fashion that James could examine how objects chosen by the mind were constituted, and in finding their attributes to be that of practical importance and intimacy with the ego, he found the characteristic mark of reality. In order to determine in further detail the content of reality, he had but to determine what things are as a matter of fact the practically valuable and interesting and, therefore, the 'believed' things. By this apparently inductive method James reached the conclusion that reality consists in the relation of things to the volitional self, and that this volitional self alone can confer reality upon objects, inasmuch as the willing and consenting ego only can establish the relation between itself and the objects in which reality consists. Here two factors are mutually dependent upon one another. First, the fundamental psychical fact, according to James, that as the mind can think differently of the same, a choice of what it shall adhere to is open to it, and constitutes the peculiar function of belief. Secondly, the view that reality is the sum total of the objects chosen and consented to by the mind. This

<sup>1</sup> Hans Cornelius, 'Versuch einer Theorie der Existentialurteile,' p. 72, München, 1894.

second proposition may not only be regarded as a corollary of the preceding one, but the first proposition, which asserts that through belief I choose my reality, can no longer be considered a falsification and sacrifice of the conception of reality, for belief is now conceived as logically prior to reality.

Such a theory could not, to be sure, escape the charge of subjectivism, but it certainly would not be touched by the particular charge of subjectivism which bases on the fact that because an idea must correspond to some fixed objective reality in order to be believed, a free will to believe can but be a will to deceive oneself. On the contrary, James's doctrine thus interpreted (and he explicitly tries to shape it in such a way) is a more complete form of subjectivism than is even Miller's interpretation, as may easily be realized if it be contrasted with the standpoint with which it has a strong outer and a slight inner similarity; I refer to Rickert's epistemology.<sup>1</sup>

Rickert, starting from entirely different points of view—from logical, methodological and epistemological points of view, namely—analyzes the judging activity. He finds it to be in essence a practical or volitional process, inasmuch as it is an attitude toward alternatives, and therefore logically involves an acknowledgment of the value of truth. And because this reference to truth (*Beurteilung*) is implicitly contained in every judgment whatsoever and because the concept reality has meaning only as the predicate in a judgment, it follows that the act of belief, the judgment of truth, is logically prior to that of reality. Thus for Rickert, too, reality is not a given or fixed being with which true judgments correspond, but the conception of reality is gained in the act of judging or believing: reality is the total content of all true judgments. The two theories differ totally, however, in that Rickert bases the objectivity of his standpoint on an exhaustive epistemological analysis, from which the points quoted above were extracted for the sake of comparison and shall now in a cursory sketch of his epistemology be returned to their proper places. The presentation of this theory may serve to make clear how necessary an epistemological foundation is for any similar standpoint, and how James, neglecting any such foundation of his doctrine, remains submerged in the most impossible subjectivism.

Rickert, then, first reaches the suggested point of view of 'subjectivism' by rejecting the epistemological standpoint which holds

<sup>1</sup> Carried out in his books 'Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis,' Freiburg, 1892, and 'Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung,' Tübingen und Leipzig, 1896-1902; cf. especially Kap. V. of the latter.

knowledge to be a copy or representation of a reality independent of consciousness. He does this on the strength of the recognition that a correspondence between ideas and a reality beyond experience could never be known, even if such a reality existed; that, in a word, thought could never grasp such being. We have, therefore, a body of knowledge affirmed in the act of judgment which can not be said to be universally valid in the sense that it portrays an absolute and given world of reality. But if so, how can the validity of knowledge be established? What can the objectivity of that which is affirmed in judgment and believed mean under these circumstances? The proof or 'grounding' of objectivity proceeds through a disclosure of the implications contained in the definition of the judging act itself. In judging, it was shown that we adopt a practical attitude; we affirm or deny; we take a stand. This implies that we are face to face with a value, which we recognize as such. Only if we recognize truth as a value, and acknowledge or will it, are we ready to make a choice, to judge. It is this free subordination to a recognized value, this willing of truth for its own sake, which guides the act of judgment. Thus for Rickert the 'choice' involved in judgment, far from being an arbitrary and indeterminate attitude, as in James's case, becomes one guided by the intellectual conscience, or the sense of 'obligation' toward a value.<sup>1</sup> Now this 'obligation' is capable of fulfilling the function of the rejected world of being and of conferring objectivity on knowledge inasmuch as it refers to an absolute and over-individual value—to that of truth—and is itself, therefore, over-individual and transcendental, and must be acknowledged as such by every judging subject. For as the will, affirming the value of truth and subordinating itself to truth as 'constraining' in the act of judgment, is the logical presupposition of *every* act of judgment, the absolute validity of this 'constraint' or 'obligation' can not be contested. Then again, the logical priority of this obligation over reality is established in that reality can mean nothing else than that which is 'judged to be real'; while in the judgment itself is comprehended the recognition of absolute value and of dutiful subordination to it. It is this subordination to the value of truth, then, or sense of obligation, which, in guiding the individual in his acts of judgment, confers objectivity on them. True or objectively valid judgments are judgments that 'ought' to be. Reality becomes conceptually that 'order of the

<sup>1</sup> Rickert's term is *das Sollen*, which has no equivalent in English. I use obligation and constraint as the closest approximations.

world which is affirmed by true, that is by dutiful (*gesollte*), judgments.<sup>1</sup>

Even this scant outline of Rickert's doctrine will serve to show how necessary an epistemological foundation is to a theory of knowledge which does not start out with a fixed conception of reality; and a comparison between it and James's doctrine will make plain that the latter lacks all traces of such a foundation. James's theory, with its individual judgments, determined by individual practical interests, resulting in a world of purely individual realities, remains a form of pure subjectivism.

Having shown that even if the rejection of a dualistic epistemology is justifiable on James's part, it can not save his doctrine from the charge of subjectivism, I shall now proceed to the proof that such is not the case, that, on the contrary, James's theory, like the other presented theories of belief, rests and must necessarily rest upon a naïve dualistic conception of reality.

Attention has before been drawn to the fact that James gets his definition of belief by contrasting it with 'mere' conception, and finding that in the former case besides conceiving an object, reality is ascribed to it. James identifies belief—reality-feeling—with judgment, because he holds judging to consist essentially in the

<sup>1</sup> Professor James criticizes this argument as rationalistic, on the one hand, and as a fantastic flight, trivial in its results, on the other hand ('Pragmatism's Conception of Truth,' *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, Vol. IV., p. 141). But classifying Rickert as a rationalist is surely doing violence to the word; his thoroughgoing voluntarism is entirely obvious and even his absolutism pretends to be grounded in experience. While his theory of knowledge as presented in the work quoted by Professor James is undeniably formal in its conclusions to the point of barrenness, to consider it trivial in the sense of conceiving it to say 'you ought to seek the truth on general principles' (analogous to 'you ought to amass wealth or take care of your health') is to utterly misconceive it. What Rickert's absolutism means to say is that any assertion or statement claiming to be true implies an acknowledgment of truth as an absolute value, and one's obligation to submit to it. The sense of obligation or subordination is unconditional for the reason that it is contained in every act of judgment claiming validity. Professor James's argument against the unconditional obligation to acknowledge truth, as he himself admits, is directed against particular concrete truths, no one of which, as he convincingly shows, need at all times occupy one's attention. But if every judgment implies a recognition of the difference between truth and falsehood and a passive acknowledgment of truth as the guiding principle and voluntary submission to it, the only condition limiting 'the application of the abstract imperative,' according to Rickert's conception, is the condition of a man who makes no statements claiming to be true or false, the man who is indifferent to the value of his thoughts—a condition of mind which might perhaps not inaptly be described as pathological.



affirmation of the reality of an object. To assent to a proposition means to hold it to be true, that is, to hold that the total object defined in the proposition is real.

Now, although this definition asserts that belief and judgment refer to a reality which stands contrasted to mere ideas, the nature of this reality is still indefinite. However, in his 'historical' study of the conditions of belief, James tells us that every object is believed through the very fact of being conceived, and as belief is cognition of reality, we must infer that every conceived object, every idea, is real. But obviously, now, this fact cancels the difference between reality and unreality, and robs the concept reality of any possible meaning. To make disbelief, doubt and reality conceptually possible, James is therefore obliged to modify this statement. He does so by adding that not all conceived objects are believed, but only those which remain *uncontradicted*: disbelief and unreality are made possible by the fact that one object may conflict with or contradict another. How this state of affairs is possible, James tries to illustrate by the example of the winged horse. The winged horse as a dream horse, as a mere idea or phantasma, may and will be believed because it conflicts with nothing; the winged horse as existing in the external world will not be believed because it is contradicted by the horses of the physical world, concerning which it is an accepted fact that they have no wings. This is said to point to the two fundamental mental facts, first, that we may think differently of the same, and second, 'that when we have done so we can choose which way of thinking to adhere to and which to disregard.' The function of making this choice is ascribed, as we know, to belief, and thereby a new conception of reality is introduced: the real world becomes the world believed in, in the sense of being chosen and adhered to by the volitional, active ego.

In this development of the causation of belief and reality there are more logical inconsistencies than could be treated from any one point of view. I shall limit my criticism to the following remarks: The fundamental error at the bottom of all this confusion of thought lies in the fact that in the argument leading to the conception of reality as that chosen by the active ego, one step, namely, the possibility of a conflict between two objects, is based not only on the assumption of a fixed and recognized reality, but, moreover, on the assumption of a reality whose nature is perfectly definite. The reason why this knot is difficult to untangle lies in the very confusing equivocation in James's use of the term belief. Let us try to realize this state of affairs by means of James's example of the new-born mind. The child, whose first experience is a candle (from the standpoint of the



psychologist, a hallucinatory candle) will believe in it, we are told, and ascribe reality to it. *Ex definitione* this means that the candle, of whatever sort its reality may be, is not a 'mere' idea. The child's whole world consists in the candle and is determined as to its nature by the nature of the candle. James states this in saying, "That candle is its all, its absolute. Its entire faculty of attention is absorbed by it. It *is*, it is *that*; it is *there* . . . no alternative, in short, suggests itself as even conceivable; so how can the mind help believing the candle real?" When later on we are told that the idea of the candle is contradicted if the child asserts, 'The candle exists in the outer world,' whereas it was uncontradicted as an illusory candle, the following criticism in regard to this argument is called for: If objects are disbelieved only when conflicting with other recognized or believed objects, the principle obviously obtains that the chronologically prior belief is the logically prior; and James himself seems to realize this, when he says that the child believes in the candle because it is its first and only experience. If this is true, however, it follows that it could never occur to the child to understand by the real outer world anything else but the spatial experience in which the candle he believes in (the illusory candle) is placed; wherefore a conflict between the two worlds is logically impossible. A conflict between them means and implies that the difference between mere subjective conceptions and existence *extra mentem meam* is already known, for to recognize the candle as illusory or subjective means that it has been judged in reference to an extra-mental world. But the child can disbelieve (judge as unreal) neither the candle nor the winged horse without first positing an outer world contrasted to mere conception as the *real world*. On the other hand, the child could say with perfect consistency 'The illusory candle is real,' for this, according to James, is but a paraphrase for 'I believe in the illusory candle.' Such a judgment becomes paradoxical only if by real is meant compatibility with the world *extra mentem*;—only then does it contain a contradiction. If the child, then, must recognize the candle as an illusion before it can conflict with the candle of the outer world, it must have recognized the outer world as the real world.

This fundamental error may be elucidated by a second chain of thought. To believe in the candle as a mere idea is a paradox according to the conception which holds belief to contrast with a mere idea. To recognize an object as 'merely' imagined or conceived, is to reject or to disbelieve it. But disbelief is possible only, we are told, if something conflicting is previously believed. In order to disbelieve the illusory candle, the child must previously have believed in the candle of the outer world, that is, have adhered to it as the

real candle. Now many passages might be quoted from James's own pages where this is explicitly stated; so, for instance, the explanation that the child does not, to be sure, know the candle to be unreal, but that the onlooking psychologist does, and that he thereby means 'that there is a world known to *us* which is real, and to which we perceive that the candle does not belong,' and that this world is the outer world of space and time. Indeed, we find the very words:<sup>1</sup> "In both existential and attributive judgments a synthesis is represented. The syllable *ex* in the word existence, *da* in the word *Dasein*, express it. 'The candle exists' is equivalent to 'The candle is *over there*.' And the 'over there' means real space, space related to other reals. The proposition amounts to saying: 'The candle is in the same space with other reals.' " This would seem sufficiently clear if the next sentence did not again assert that the real existence of these other things resolves itself into a relation to the ego, in the sense of the criticized point of view. Thus the whole process is again reversed and the old inconsistency obtains.

The explanation of this constant confusion lies, as was said, in an equivocation in the use of the word belief. First we have belief explicitly defined as belief in the *reality* of an object, and then it is tacitly taken for granted that belief may also refer to an idea *qua* idea (we may believe in the candle as an illusion). By idea we must understand a mere idea (a phantasm, illusion, image, or whatever we wish to call it), for to speak of the recognition of and belief in an idea in the sense of a state of consciousness merely is absurd, as everything appearing before the consciousness *is* before it, exists for it, and can neither be doubted nor disbelieved as a mere fact. To state anything of the sort explicitly is no assertion, but only a tautological phrase.<sup>2</sup> It follows from the definition, however, that belief in a conceived object as a mere conception is a logical paradox, and yet the possibility of a contradiction of two objects and the subse-

<sup>1</sup> 'Psychology,' Vol. II., p. 290, foot-note.

<sup>2</sup> I can not, therefore, agree with Cornelius when he asserts in his otherwise very subtle and successful polemic against James's theory ('Existentialurteile,' p. 75 ff.) that its chief error lies in the fact that James did not realize that 'an idea as such must necessarily be recognized, assented to . . . that, therefore, no special feeling of belief need supervene in order specially to acquiesce in the idea, which, on the contrary, is, as soon as it is presented, *eo ipso* assented to or believed' (p. 77). James surely does not dream of denying so self-evident a fact, and understands by belief, as he defines it too, the sense of the reality of a conceived object—the use of the word object over against idea is, for that matter, significant. The only question to come up is, What does he understand by idea in speaking of belief in the reality of an idea as an idea? He means and must mean the reality of an idea as a 'mere' idea, as a phantasm, in distinction from an idea to which a real object corresponds.

quent choice in the act of belief depended on just this possibility of both believing in objects as *extra mentem* and believing in them as mere ideas.

We need only remember that recognition of the object of a proposition as a mere idea is equivalent to disbelief in it, and can, therefore, be engendered by a prior affirmation of a contradictory proposition only in order to realize that the affirmation of reality as the outer world is contained in the denial of the reality of mere conceptions. Belief is belief in a reality *extra mentem meam*, and only by the assumption of such a real outer world, which it is the function of belief to cognize, can James consistently develop the process which leads him later on to identify belief and choice. 'Choice,' we may incidentally point out, is evidently a metaphorical expression in this context. The object can not be judged otherwise than according to whether or not it belongs to the real world, already recognized, and characterized by certain qualities; and there is, therefore, a definite 'constraint' in the decision expressed by the so-called act of choice, which is not, certainly, suggested by the term 'choice.' What these marks are by which reality is cognized, whether they consist primarily in a limitation of the activity of attention, or, rather, as James thinks, in their power to arouse the attention and the interest and relate themselves intimately to the practical ego—this is a purely material question. Logically, there is no objection to James's opinion that reality is known by its power of arousing the feelings and awakening interest, so long as the impression is not thereby given that through cognition or belief the reality is *created*. The reality is the world outside the mind of the psychophysical individual, and is cognized in the act of belief.

The essential point is, that this being the case, there is as little room for volitional choice in James's theory of belief as in the other presented theories, for if knowledge is a relation between ideas *in mente mea* and objects *extra mentem meam*, and these objects are realities independent of belief, then a will to believe, or judgment in accordance with wishes, can indeed be nothing other than a will to deceive oneself; and the will to deceive oneself is logically incompatible with the will for truth. That willing to believe is psychologically possible may for the present remain uncontradicted; that freely willed belief is no form of cognition of the objective world has been proved.

Now this standpoint of naïve dualism is the very *conditio sine qua non* of psychology. Psychology deals with the individual mind surrounded by an outer world filled with other individual minds and objects. This implies that states of consciousness have already been

conceived as psychical over against the physical objects to which they refer. The psychological problem of knowledge thus becomes the special problem of how the individual in his psychical processes cognizes the independent world of space and time. The confusion of this problem with the epistemological one of the objectivity of all states of consciousness, counting as such the physical world as well as the other individuals and the individual himself so far as it is possible for him to be an object of consciousness to himself—this confusion leads to the extraordinary confusion which may be generally observed in the treatment of the problems of knowledge.

The possibility of escaping the dilemma which confronted us at the end of the last chapter is lost. It was there shown how the justification of religious belief on the grounds that all knowledge is free belief or faith led to a dilemma, in that the identification of knowledge with that free belief necessary for the realization of the religious hypothesis led either to the nullification of the conception of knowledge or to an unbridgable gulf between knowledge and faith. The argument used to prove this presupposed that for James judgment or belief was the cognition of reality and truth: only under these circumstances could the distinction between the belief at the basis of all judgment and the freely chosen or willed belief of the religious hypothesis be made.

We are now in a position to see that this presupposition was justifiable. Belief for James is cognition of reality, and herewith we have demonstrated that the defense of the religious hypothesis by means of the arguments that belief is a necessary factor in its realization and that we may freely will to believe because belief is the essence of all knowledge, nullifies knowledge itself. In other words, the whole undertaking was self-destructive, for in attempting to prove the validity of faith or free belief, it was obliged to nullify the conception of valid knowledge itself.

It has been shown, then, that if belief or judgment be held to be cognition, we are not 'free' in judging or believing. If we decide to believe 'freely,' or 'will to believe,' we decide in favor of self-deception. Belief having no reality for its object is deception; belief when conscious of this fact is self-deception.

Furthermore, in identifying the conception 'freely chosen belief' with 'the will to believe,'<sup>1</sup> James unconsciously shows that it was not

<sup>1</sup>This identification is not only tacitly made in the essay 'The Will to Believe,' as is indicated by its title; it may be found again and again in the 'Psychology.'

possible to carry through the identification of will and belief. For what meaning could otherwise attach to the expression 'will to believe'? It would be as tautological as, for instance, the expression 'will to will' or 'believe that you believe.' And, indeed, the preceding argument directed against the possibility of conceiving belief as choice, contains the proof of the inconsistency of the identification of will and belief. For it was through the conception of belief as a choice in which the individual and his interests were manifested, that its identity with the will was inferred. Both belief and will were then referred to the choice performed by the attention. As we now know, that belief can not according to James's own presuppositions be conceived as a choosing of reality, but only as cognition of it, and that the will, on the other hand, as set forth by him, must be conceived as a choice of the objects to be realized and performed, it follows that the identification of will and belief no longer holds good. On the contrary, it is now evident that James's religious standpoint stands in distinct contradiction to his theory of the will. The only remarks on belief to be found in his psychology consistent with the standpoint on which his 'Will to Believe and other Essays' rests, are those at the end of the chapter on the 'Perception of Reality.' Here, it will be remembered, the *difference* between belief and will is formulated in such a way that belief is said to have to do with objects 'which do not change according as we think regarding them,' whereas in the case of will their existence is said to depend on our thoughts and on the movements of our bodies.

But if it is true that this dualism of will and belief is the only logical conclusion to be inferred from James's premises, we must brand all contradictory statements as unjustifiable. Such a total contradiction is contained in the theory that belief, being identical with will, is a purely inner activity directed to inner phenomena; in other words, that belief and will are reducible to attention to an idea and consent to its presence before the mind. Regarding this theory we are now in a position to say: According to James's definition belief is not the recognition of an idea as such, but the cognition of a reality independent of the idea. Freely chosen belief thus resolves itself into a 'will to believe.'

Logically, now, this 'will to believe' is, as we saw, a will to deceive oneself. But how is it constituted from a psychological point of view: is it indeed possible to will to believe; and if so, how can it be done? Just what are we to understand when we are told: Choose freely to believe in a fact which it is possible to doubt, or which does not yet exist, for only by believing will you be inspired to

act in such a way that you will realize the object or recognize the fact?<sup>1</sup>

Obviously now, this belief, although related to knowledge in no other way, must share with it the condition of *feeling* like a conviction of the reality of its object, which, according to the premises, is *not* real. How can the individual produce this inner feeling of conviction? Two methods are conceivable. The first is a process which has been described by Miller (in the article mentioned) as follows: (The subject is supposed to be communing with himself.) "This thing seems to my best intelligence doubtful; but I will subject my mind to such a course of treatment; I will so tempt and beguile it by presenting this one matter for its credence, and withholding rivals; I will so hypnotize it by keeping its gaze on this one brilliant object that I shall presently find myself reposing in the peaceable possession of a full belief."<sup>2</sup> This method rests upon the assumption of two theories: first, that the will is identical with voluntary attention and has the power of controlling absolutely the ideational process; and secondly, that an idea which commands attention is *ipso facto* believed. Now it is evident that those psychologists who do not agree to the second proposition, but hold rather that an idea must not only appear and be attended to in order to be believed, but must appear in a certain manner—be it as an obstacle to voluntary attention or otherwise—these psychologists must, if consistent, reject this method of producing belief. The question to come up for us then is: Has James proved his right to subscribe to these two propositions? As for the first, we know that James does ascribe to attention with effort the power of influencing the conflict of ideas and its normal development by throwing itself on one or the other idea and strengthening it. But to assert that the will has power enough to successfully control the whole ideational process, this is to assert that the will can exert an indeterminate amount of effort, that, in James's sense, the will is free. If we consider now the case cited above as analogous to the religious hypothesis, namely, the case of the decision to leap the abyss, it presents itself as a case in which just this unlimited freedom of the will must be assumed before one would be inclined to expect perfect success on the part of the will. For if one stand on the edge of a precipice and must make a difficult leap to save his life—a performance possible only if he believed in his power to accomplish it, and if an equally strong doubt of his power is

<sup>1</sup> Here the two conceptions of faith, as a factor first in the realization and second in the cognition of a fact, are taken into account, although the first conception is the one characteristic of James's doctrine as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> Compare James, 'Psychology,' Vol. II., pp. 572 and 573.

simultaneously present in his consciousness—an unlimitedly free will to believe would indeed seem called for to quash the consciousness of a lack of power which in its consequences spells death. The question of James's right to the assumption of such a free will has not yet been considered; until we have come to a decision on this point, the question may be left open. Its answer is not imperative at the present moment anyhow, in view of the fact that James certainly can not defend the second proposition upon which the possibility of this method rests.

Concerning this second proposition, several things may be said. The first obvious point is that even if it were true that an idea is believed through the mere fact of being attended to, these facts could not apply to the religious hypothesis; for James tells us that voluntary attention to an object is possible only for several consecutive seconds.<sup>1</sup> After this period of time other associated ideas push themselves to the fore of the attention. If we are not to suppose, then, that action follows upon the voluntarily attended idea within the period of a few seconds, the voluntary effort can have no importance for action. But what meaning and what application can such a fact have for the case of the religious hypothesis? One might, perhaps, direct his attention to the idea of the divine world-order, but a belief in it would last only so long as the contradictory idea of the unreality of this world-order was held in abeyance or dislodged from consciousness. With the cessation of the effort to attend, the belief in the unreality of the divine order would again assert itself, and one could no longer deceive oneself. But, as the belief in the divine world-order is said to be *continually* necessary as a stimulus to right action, one can not see of what value a merely periodically recurring faith could be. Inasmuch as the attention can hold an idea only temporarily, one could never then believe a thing once for all by the method of attention with effort.

As a matter of fact, however, James can not consistently subscribe to the theory that whatever is attended to, is *ipso facto* believed.<sup>2</sup> As we know, he held that only 'uncontradicted' ideas were

<sup>1</sup> 'Psychology,' Vol. I., p. 420, Vol. II., p. 568.

<sup>2</sup> Such a theory of the generation of a belief in validity is in direct contradiction to the pragmatic conception of belief, as was shown above. I find a passage which expresses this opposition in a few words, and therefore quote it. (Dewey, 'Studies in Logical Theory,' p. 74.) "'Blue' as a mere detached floating meaning, an idea at large, would not gain in validity simply by being entertained continuously in a given consciousness; or by being made at one and the same time the persistent object of attentive regard by all human consciousness. If this were all that were required, the chimera, the centaur, or any other subjective construction, could easily gain validity."



believed, and we saw that by uncontradicted he really meant uncontradicted by the outer world of experience. So, for instance, if I will to turn my attention to the idea of a blue tree, I would believe in its reality in case there were not previously in my mind a conception of reality as an outer world in which no blue trees grow. It is this real world which prevents me from believing in the blue tree, no matter how much effort I expend on attending to it.

These rather obvious objections to method one had to be emphasized because the only other conceivable method of 'willing to believe,' although psychologically much more comprehensible, is from a logical point of view totally paradoxical. The process of this method is as follows: "We need only in cold blood *act* as if the thing in question were real, and keep acting as if it were real, and it will infallibly end by growing into such a connection with our life that it will become real."<sup>1</sup> No one will feel inclined to deny that this method is psychologically possible, and we are therefore constrained to regard it as the only possible one for any one wishing to 'will to believe' the religious hypothesis. But thereby we gain an insight into the totally paradoxical nature of James's attempted defense of religious belief. On the one hand, we are told: You are justified, nay, obliged to believe in the religious world-order, because your belief in it is a necessary factor to its reality, in that by a belief in God will you alone be inspired to act in such a way as to realize the moral order which guarantees Him. ("The whole defense of religious faith hinges on action." Religious faith, because necessary for right action, brings about the reality of its object.)

On the other hand, we are told: You can not will to believe in the sense of believing abruptly at will—instantaneous beliefs are not to be attained by the will—but you can *act* as if you believed, thereby the object of belief—in our case the divine world-order—will grow real; then you can indeed believe in it.

A summary of the results of our criticism is now in order. James's theory of judgment is unsuccessful in supplying a foundation for the justification of religious faith. First, inasmuch as religious faith and knowledge are not harmonized, for the free belief called for by the religious hypothesis proved to be a different mental attitude from that belief which the theory of judgment established as the essence of all knowledge. The reason for this was shown to lie in James's peculiar conception of freedom, according to which free belief, although supposed to be a conscious choice and therefore logically demanding determinants, could not be held to be deter-

<sup>1</sup> James's 'Psychology,' Vol. II., p. 321; cf. above page.



mined by the perception of truth or of reality. If then, belief, in the sense of judgment, does not create reality but cognizes it, free belief or faith is not cognition but self-deception.

In the second place, free belief is unsuccessful as a basis for religious faith inasmuch as its identity with free will had to be denied, and it was recognized to be merely a feeling of conviction, which might be produced or annulled according to wish. That the only method the mind could employ to accomplish this end was a process of 'make-believe,' was shown. As the justification of this will to believe rested on the assumption that the belief was a necessary factor for action leading to the reality of the religious world-order, we are now in a position to see that this belief depending upon the realization of its object (the divine order) can not come into existence at all: it is its own presupposition.

So even 'free belief' in the sense of a 'will to believe' supplies no basis for the defense of religious faith.

## CHAPTER V

### JAMES'S DEFENSE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF AS A VICIOUS CIRCLE

The freedom of belief as a justifiable free postulate—The problematic attitude in its relation to the defense of religious belief—The basic presupposition of James's justification of freedom.

UNTIL now we have taken for granted that James is justified in assuming the freedom of the will and of belief. We have shown merely, that, owing to his peculiar conceptions of the will as choice and of freedom as indeterminism, free belief has nothing in common with belief claiming to be true, but resolves itself rather into a desire or a will to believe. The method for producing this belief was, as we saw, that of making believe. We now purpose to show that the reason James's argument in defense of religious faith led to conclusions so different from his intended results, lies in the fact that his argument is a vicious circle. Free will, and with it free belief, was not theoretically grounded, but *freely assumed or postulated* on the grounds of practical needs. Let us hear James's own words on the subject: "The most that any argument can do for determinism is to make it a clear and seductive conception, which a man is foolish not to espouse, so long as he stands by the great scientific postulate that the world must be one unbroken fact, and that prediction of all things without exception must be ideally, even if not actually, possible. It is a *moral* postulate about the universe, the postulate that *what ought to be can be, and that bad acts can not be fated, but that good ones must be possible in their place*, which would lead one to espouse the contrary view."<sup>1</sup>

And, continues James, if moral and scientific postulates conflict, and objective proof is wanting, the only method of deciding between them is that of voluntary choice; for the seeming alternative—doubt or skepticism—when systematic, is itself voluntary choice. "If, meanwhile, the will *be* undetermined, it would seem only fitting that the belief in its indetermination should be voluntarily chosen from amongst other possible beliefs. Freedom's first deed should be to affirm itself. We ought never to hope for any other method of getting at the truth if indeterminism be a fact."

This passage must be so understood that it presents the conflict between theoretical and practical rationality as a case for free choice

<sup>1</sup> 'Psychology,' Vol. II., p. 573.

in favor of the one or the other. In the beginning of the essay 'The Dilemma of Determinism'<sup>1</sup> James describes the situation more exactly: "If a certain formula for expressing the nature of the world violates my moral demand, I shall feel as free to throw it overboard, or at least to doubt it, as if it disappointed my demand for uniformity of sequence, for example; the one demand being, so far as I can see, quite as subjective and emotional as the other is."<sup>2</sup>

This justification of free will is based upon a perfect coordination of theoretical and practical rationality. Both are valid in that

<sup>1</sup> 'The Will to Believe,' p. 147 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Lipps's standpoint forms a curiously close parallel to this one. In a consideration of the relation between faith and knowledge (*'Grundtatsachen des Seelenlebens,'* p. 403) the following passage occurs: "All knowledge is objectively valid in so far as it follows of necessity from the universality of human nature and its laws of belief. For the same reason we must ascribe objective validity to moral convictions in so far as they flow from the universality of human nature and the laws of its valuation. . . . The final result might perhaps be a conflict between actual and objectively valid moral convictions and knowledge with its most certain results. In such a case we should, in accordance with our nature, be condemned to a state of doubt. That our moral conviction would have to give way to our intellectual conviction in all cases is to many a self-understood matter. I, however, search in vain for a psychological fact from which this law could be inferred. Both have their ultimate basis in different spheres of our human nature. And who shall say, This sphere of human nature has precedence over that other? In one individual the former, in another the latter, side of human nature may predominate. This is a question which the individual must settle for himself. But he has absolutely no right to obtrude his personal feeling upon others. . . . There always will be questions, which from the point of view of knowledge may be answered by either 'yes' or 'no.' When this is the case it is no more than right that moral needs should throw the decisive weight in the scales." (*"Alles Erkennen hat objektive Geltung, insofern es mit Notwendigkeit aus der allgemeinen menschlichen Natur und ihren Gesetzen des Fürwahrhaltens herfließt. Ebenso müssen wir der sittlichen Überzeugung objektive Gültigkeit zuschreiben, sofern sie mit Notwendigkeit aus der allgemeinen menschlichen Natur und den ihr eigenen Gesetzen der Wertschätzung herfließt. Schliesslich könnte freilich sich ergeben dass auch wirkliche und objektiv gültige sittliche Überzeugungen der Erkenntnis und ihren sichersten Ergebnissen widerstreiten. Dann wären wir unserer Natur nach zum Zweifel verurteilt. Denn dass die sittliche Überzeugung der verstandesmässigen unter allen Umständen weichen müsse, scheint zwar manchem selbstverständlich. Ich sehe mich aber vergeblich nach der psychologischen Tatsache um, aus der dies Gesetz fließen könnte. Beide haben ihren letzten Grund in verschiedenen Bezirken der menschlichen Natur. Wer aber will sagen dies Gebiet der menschlichen Natur habe den Vorrang vor jenem. Beim einen mag diese, beim andern jene Seite des menschlichen Wesens überwiegen. Das hat er dann mit sich selbst auszumachen. Dem andern seine persönliche Eigenart aufzudrängen, dazu fehlt ihm jedes Recht. . . . Immer wird es Fragen geben, auf die vom Standpunkt der Erkenntnis Ja und Nein als Antwort möglich ist. Wo es so steht, ist es nur Recht, dass das sittliche Bedürfniss ein entscheidendes Gewicht in die Wagschale werfe."*)

each has its own kind of truth. Nevertheless, these kinds of truth may be incompatible, and a choice must then be made. The 'more rational' rationality, the 'truer' truth—and that again can only mean that which assists the fluency of thought in the individual in question—is to be freely adopted.

As a reply to such a form of subjectivism, based as it is on the complete disruption of the concept truth, this *argumentum ad hominem* may suffice, that the assumption of this theory completely inhibits our fluency of thought, appears irrational therefore, and hence must be untrue.

But in the justification of the freedom of the will, as before in that of religious belief, James has pursued still another course, one that opened out to him upon his admission that the question of free will is insoluble on strictly psychological grounds.<sup>1</sup> Theoretically, we are told, neither determinism nor indeterminism can be proved; for the question of freedom is the question whether the duration and intensity of the amount of effort of attention which we can at any time put forth are fixed functions of the object or not. If not, it means that we might exert more or less of it as we choose. That it seems so to us is a fact, but whether it is or not we can not decide, continues James, because in order to know that 'we should have to ascend to the antecedents of the effort, and defining them with mathematical exactitude, prove, by laws of which we have not at present even an inkling, that the only amount of sequent effort which could *possibly* comport with them was the precise amount which actually came.'<sup>2</sup> This method of proof will forever be beyond human reach, says James, and just therefore, because the question is an open one, we may adopt one or the other postulate as we choose. A number of passages from the 'Dilemma of Determinism' in support of this point of view might be cited; from among them we select the following: "Now, evidence of an external kind to decide between determinism and indeterminism is . . . strictly impossible to find."<sup>3</sup> And again: "I now repeat what I said at the outset, that, from any strict theoretical point of view, the question is insoluble."<sup>4</sup>

But if this foundation of the defense of freedom is James's characteristic one, and this can not be doubted, we have before us a classical example of James's 'thesis' cited above.<sup>5</sup> We are face to face with an option which can not be decided on intellectual grounds and toward which a problematic attitude is itself, according to

<sup>1</sup> 'Psychology,' Vol. II., p. 572.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 572.

<sup>3</sup> 'Will to Believe,' p. 150.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11; cf. above, p. 11.

James, a 'passional decision'; therefore we have at least as much right to decide yes or no as to leave the question open. Indeed, the justification is far greater. For, supposing that the theoretically doubtful freedom of the will be a fact, we could never know it excepting by believing it; 'freedom's first deed should be to affirm itself.'

Before demonstrating the circular nature of this argument, I shall interpolate a criticism of James's assertion that the problematic attitude is not an intellectual or theoretical, but a passional, decision, attended with the same risk of losing the truth as the passional decisions yes and no. It must not be lost sight of, that, as this argument about the problematic attitude plays the same rôle in the defense of religious faith as in the defense of freedom, its criticism in the following paragraph is a supplementary criticism of James's defense of religion as well.<sup>1</sup>

When James tells us that the attitude of leaving a question open is a passional decision, 'just like deciding yes or no, and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth,' we must first of all ask ourselves: With what sort of decision is the passional decision contrasted? Evidently now with the theoretical decision, yes or no, also called intellectual decision by James. For the sake of clearness we must ask further: What distinguishes these two kinds of decisions, the theoretical and passional? The only answer to be derived from James's explicit statements is that the former type of decision consists in judging according to 'objective evidence,' which is at times called 'coercive evidence,' whereas the passional decision is a decision without objective evidence: it is a decision to act on an uncertain fact for the sake of the end to which the action may lead. If, then, the theoretical judgment is a decision based on objective evidence, is the problematic judgment of a theoretical or a passional nature? What, in short, is the problematic judgment in essence?

Sigwart, as is known, casts the problematic judgment out of the family of true judgments, because it lacks the consciousness of objective validity.<sup>2</sup> He formulates the problematic judgment to read: *A* may be *B*, in the sense of *A* is perhaps *B*. As this judgment is an

<sup>1</sup> In Chapter II., where the relation of knowledge and faith was treated, there was no occasion to consider this special argument. There we could assume that having proved that James did not establish a relation between knowledge and faith capable of conferring certainty upon faith, his particular argument in regard to the problematic judgment was thereby invalidated. As this may not on the face of it be entirely convincing, the following discussion may be considered supplementary to the critique of that chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Sigwart, 'Logik,' Vol. I., p. 229 ff., Freiburg, 1889.

expression of uncertainty regarding *A*, the proposition, if conceived as a judgment about *A* (as it is conceived in the formulation), is not a decision, but a renunciation of decision. If, then, every judgment is an affirmation or denial of a question, a proposition which neither affirms or denies anything can not be a judgment. "To leave a question undecided is no sort of decision, and to be uncertain is no degree of certainty; and in spite of the law of contradiction, the two propositions, *A* is perhaps *B*, and *A* is perhaps not *B*, would be valid at the same time." ("Es ist keine Art der Entscheidung, die Frage unentschieden zu lassen, und keine Stufe der Gewissheit, ungewiss zu sein, und dem Gesetz des Widerspruchs zum Trotz wären: *A* ist vielleicht *B*, und *A* ist vielleicht nicht *B*, zugleich gültig.") Sigwart admits, nevertheless, that the problematic judgment contains at least one real assertion, namely, this: The hypothesis *A* is *B* is uncertain. As this assertion leads to no judgment concerning *A* that could be coordinated with a positive and negative judgment, it must be considered a subjective attitude, having indeed a certain validity for knowledge in general, but not for knowledge about *A*. "So long as this is not the case, the hypothesis remains an undecided problem, and it but confuses us if we subsume the expression of subjective uncertainty and the expression of certainty of the objective validity of a proposition under one and the same concept." ("So lange das nicht der Fall ist, bleibt die Hypothese als unentschiedenes Problem stehen, und es kann nur verwirren, wenn man den Ausdruck der subjektiven Ungewissheit und den Ausdruck der Gewissheit der objektiven Gültigkeit eines Satzes unter denselben Begriff des Urteils subsumiert."<sup>1</sup>)

In the greatest possible contrast to Sigwart's point of view stands that of Windelband, who regards the problematic judgment not only as a judgment *überhaupt*, but as one to be coordinated with the positive and negative judgments. This point of view is based on an entirely different conception of the nature of the judgment itself. According to Windelband, the essence of judging does not lie in the fact that something is asserted about something, but rather in the supervening 'assent or dissent' to the combination of ideas already made or about to be made in the proposition '*A-B*' ('billigende und missbilligende *Beurteilung* der schon vollzogenen oder erst zu vollziehenden Vorstellungsverbindung *A-B*.' ) This mere combination of ideas expressed in what James calls the hypothesis, is called by Windelband the 'theoretical judgment'; and the real judgment is said to be a judgment about a judgment, about the truth-value of a judgment ('die *Beurteilung* eines

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

Urteils').<sup>1</sup> But this judgment is a practical attitude; if, for instance, it be a negative judgment, it is 'the expression not merely of a combination of ideas, but of the dissenting attitude of the mind to an attempt at such a combination.' As soon as 'an assertion in regard to the truth-value of an idea or combination of ideas' is considered the essence of judgment, the coordination of negative and affirmative judgments and the classification of judgments according to quality are demanded.<sup>2</sup> Inasmuch as judgment so conceived is a feeling of conviction or certainty, it admits of a gradation in regard to intensity. If one imagines the different grades of probability schematized along a line, the two ends would represent perfect certainty; at one end affirmation, at the other denial; and these two through gradual toning down would approach a point of indifference where neither affirmation nor denial would exist. This point of total indifference is represented by the question, because it is a mere complex of ideas or hypothesis without any decision as to its truth value. On the other hand, the problematic judgment is defined as 'critical indifference,' because here upon reflection the knowledge has been gained that there is no evidence for the affirmation nor for the denial of the hypothesis. The condition of uncertainty, then, finds its expression in the problematic judgment. "The proposition, *A* may be *B*, which confessedly is valid simultaneously with the other proposition, *A* can not be *B*, is a truly problematic judgment only when it means that nothing shall be asserted concerning the validity of the proposition, *A-B*." ("Der Satz *A* kann *B* sein, welcher bekanntlich mit dem andern Satze *A* kann nicht *B* sein, zugleich gilt, ist nur dann ein wirklich problematisches Urteil, wenn er bedeutet, dass über die Geltung der Vorstellungsverbindung *A-B* nichts ausgesagt werden soll.") The problematic judgment is, therefore, an explicit *suspension* of judgment, but differs from the 'question' in that it 'results from a knowledge of the insufficiency of the evidence for and against, wherefore it is a real act of knowledge.' ("Aus einer Einsicht in die Unzulänglichkeit der bisherigen (oder auch überhaupt möglichen) Gründe pro et contra hervorgeht und deshalb ein wirklicher Akt der Erkenntnis ist.") This self-conscious attitude, this renunciation of affirmation or negation, is an 'independent decision concerning the attitude which the judging

<sup>1</sup> I know of no adequate way in which to give the distinction between *Beurteilung* and *Urteil* at the basis of this theory, in English words; henceforth I shall reserve the term judgment for *Beurteilung* and translate *Urteil* by proposition, object or hypothesis. This theory of Windelband's is to be found in his 'Beiträge zur Lehre vom negativen Urteil,' *Strassburger Abhandlungen zur Philosophie*, S. 170, Freiburg und Tübingen, 1884.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186 ff.



subject adopts toward the combination of ideas presented by the question, and the problematic judgment must, therefore, in a classification according to quality, be coordinated with the affirmative and negative judgment.' ("Eine selbständige Entscheidung der Stellung welche der Urteilende zu der in der Frage vollzogenen Vorstellungsverbindung einnimmt, und das problematische Urteil ist in der Einteilung nach der Qualität dem affirmativen und dem negativen Urteil zu koordinieren.")<sup>1</sup>

In view of the diametrically opposed nature of these two theories of the problematic judgment, it is a significant fact that they agree in several essential points. In the first place, both logicians formulate the problematic judgment similarly, namely, as *A* may be *B*; which Sigwart supplements by adding, 'in the sense that *A* perhaps is *B*.' Both deny that this proposition asserts anything about the truth of the hypothesis *A-B*. Finally, both Sigwart and Windelband hold that the problematic judgment is an act of knowledge in that it contains a real assertion and makes a real statement. According to Sigwart's formulation, the assertion it makes is this: the hypothesis '*A* is *B*' is uncertain; while according to Windelband, the proposition '*A* can be *B*' is a truly problematic judgment only if it means 'concerning the validity of the proposition *A-B* nothing can be said.'

At first blush it would seem probable, in view of this agreement, to attribute the conflicting nature of the results arrived at by the two thinkers to the fundamental difference of their respective conceptions of the act of judgment itself. But on a closer inspection it will be seen that this explanation is not justifiable; the truth is that in both cases the results reached concerning the problematic judgment are due to a confusion of thought.

To discuss Sigwart first, then: In his case it is not quite clear what subject a proposition must assert something of in order to be a true judgment, whether about *A*—the subject of the proposition—or about the validity of the total proposition—the synthesis *A-B*—obviously two entirely different 'objects' of judgment. If the problematic judgment must be a judgment about *A*, then, as it says '*A* is perhaps *B*' and thus asserts nothing claiming to be true about *A*, it certainly can not be a judgment proper. If this view of the matter be held, namely, that the problematical judgment is no act of knowledge, we are logically bound to banish the so-called problematic judgment from the domain of logic. Just this conclusion, however, leads us to reconsider the premises. For, in the first place, no one will be inclined seriously to support the view that the problematic

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189 ff.



judgment contains no real assertion, and then again, this view is in opposition to Sigwart's own words. For, as we saw, he admits that the problematic judgment expresses a real assertion in that it affirms the impossibility of reaching a decision; and he adds that 'this knowledge has its value.' It appears, then, that unless we are ready to deny this, we must drop the theory which holds the problematic judgment to be an assertion concerning *A*, in the sense of stating '*A* is perhaps *B*, or is perhaps not *B*.' Considered an act of knowledge, the real assertion it makes should read, according to Sigwart: The hypothesis *A-B* is uncertain. But this assertion is said to refer only to the speaker's attitude toward the hypothesis, or at most to the general subjective attitude toward it; the hypothesis itself remains an undecided problem, Sigwart claims, and 'it can but confuse us if we subsume the expression of subjective uncertainty and the expression of the certainty of the objective validity of a proposition under the same concept.' These last words, now, seem to contain the other conception of the judgment, to which we drew attention above. It appears here that a judgment is no longer to be considered an assertion about *A* (the subject of the proposition), but rather an assertion about the validity of the proposition as a whole. The conclusion is then drawn that as the problematic judgment asserts nothing about the validity of the proposition *A-B*, but lets it stand as a problem, it is no real judgment, only an assertion of subjective uncertainty. But it is perfectly obvious that just on the assumption that a judgment is an assertion about the validity of the proposition as a whole, the problematic judgment is a true judgment, for in Sigwart's own formulation it asserts: the proposition 'The hypothesis *A-B* is uncertain' is objectively valid.

Sigwart's conclusion is fallacious, because it is based on the tacit assumption that the proposition or object concerning whose validity the problematic judgment attempts to assert something, is the proposition *A-B*, whereas even according to his own formulation this is not the case. If once we realize this, the conception of the problematic judgment as an expression of subjective uncertainty falls to the ground. The mind is not uncertain concerning its attitude toward the object of the problematic judgment, the proposition, namely, 'The hypothesis *A-B* is uncertain'; if so, the problematic judgment would read, 'I am uncertain whether *A-B* is uncertain,' which is absurd; the mind is uncertain only in regard to the subject of the proposition which it is to judge—the formal *A*.<sup>1</sup> As we

<sup>1</sup> The formal *A*, the subject of the proposition, is in the case of the problematic judgment the hypothesis *A-B*. Therefore the problematic judgment would indeed be no judgment if its function were to predicate something about the subject of the proposition.

have dropped the conception of the judgment as an assertion about the subject of the proposition, this fact is of no importance. We see, then, that just on the assumption that a judgment is a decision on the validity of the proposition as a whole, the problematic judgment is a real judgment, claiming to contain certain knowledge. Its object, the proposition concerning whose validity it decides, is, however, not  $A-B$ , but, in Sigwart's formulation, ' $A-B$  is uncertain.' Only then is it comprehensible how Sigwart could ascribe validity as knowledge to it.

In Windelband's case the facts lie differently, but his conception, too, of the problematic judgment is not unequivocal. Like Sigwart, he first formulates the problematic judgment in the proposition ' $A$  may be  $B$ ,' and from a foot-note in his '*Beiträge zur Lehre vom negativen Urteil*'<sup>1</sup> it is clear that he, too, understands this to mean ' $A$  is perhaps  $B$ .' In the light of his standpoint, from which a real judgment is a judgment of the validity of the combination of ideas represented in the question or the hypothesis, we must reject this formulation as inconsistent and inadmissible. Windelband himself appears to have felt this when he adds that the formulation given above must mean that nothing can be asserted concerning the validity of  $A-B$ ; in other words, that the problematic judgment is an expression of the suspension of judgment. At the same time he holds the problematic judgment to be a real act of knowledge in that it expresses the insufficiency of the reasons *pro* and *contra* a decision about the hypothesis. The more surprising, therefore, that he has not formulated the problematic judgment accordingly. The reason doubtless lies in the fact that, in spite of holding the problematic judgment to be an assertion of the impossibility of judging the hypothesis  $A-B$ , Windelband coordinates it with the positive and negative judgments, which obviously would be justifiable only on the supposition that the three forms of judgments judge one and the same object or hypothesis, which, however, is not the case, as will be shown.

Affirmative as well as negative judgments are, according to Windelband, judgments in the sense of decisions concerning the validity (truth value) or invalidity of the ideas as they are combined in the proposition. Judgment is the attitude which the mind takes toward a proposition as a whole.<sup>2</sup> The problematic judgment, on the contrary, is, according to Windelband, a decision concerning the

<sup>1</sup> P. 189, foot-note 3.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. '*Præludien*,' p. 29 ff. Here we are told also: The pure theoretical judgment is really given in the so-called problematic judgment, which expresses a certain combination of ideas without pronouncing upon its truth. As this formulation is contradictory to all Windelband's other definitions and expositions, we may regard it as a transitory opinion only.

*attitude itself*, that the mind takes toward the validity of the proposition. It is, therefore, a judgment about a judgment; the problematic judgment judges, not the validity of the proposition, but the validity of the decision itself.

We come to the conclusion, then, that the problematic judgment is an act of knowledge and therefore must necessarily be considered a judgment claiming to assert something. It follows, that it is neither an expression of subjective uncertainty, as Sigwart inclines to think, nor, on the other hand, a judgment about the validity of  $A-B$ , as Windelband appears to believe. In accordance with Sigwart's general standpoint, it must be conceived as an assertion of the uncertainty of the hypothesis  $A-B$ , and accompanied by the conviction of objective certitude or validity. According to Windelband's general standpoint, it is an affirmative attitude toward the proposition 'There are no sufficient reasons for decision in regard to the validity of  $A-B$ .'<sup>1</sup>

If we turn to account the insight we have gained into the nature of the problematic judgment for our answer to the question which was raised by James's assertion that the problematic judgment is a passional decision, while the theoretical judgment is based on objective evidence, we are now in a position to reply: The problematic judgment is an assertion claiming to be true. It can be formulated as an affirmative judgment, and in point of form, if not in point of content, is of precisely the same nature as the latter. It is based on the same sort of objective evidence as are the affirmative and negative judgments, the evidence referring, of course, to the objects of the judgments; the object of the problematic judgment differing, to be sure, from the objects of the original affirmative and negative judgments. The judgment 'There are insufficient reasons for a decision concerning  $A-B$ ,' or, in James's logical terminology, 'There

<sup>1</sup>This analysis throws a peculiar light on Lipps's remarks about the problematic judgment. ('Grundtatsachen des Seelenlebens,' p. 396.) He here defines the judgment as an assertion of objective reality or validity. "Propositions expressing mere possibility, such as ' $S$  may be  $P$ ,' may now, he says, be cited as evidence to the contrary." "But," he continues, "all propositions are not judgments. The one above (' $S$  may be  $P$ ') may intend to express the positive renunciation of judgment. Or it may mean to say that there are reasons for the decision ' $S$  is  $P$ ;' but the reasons are not sufficient to permit a *certain* judgment. In this latter case the proposition is an assertion of a consciousness of reality, but of an *uncertain* consciousness of reality." (!) ("Aber wiederum sind Sätze kein Urteil. Jener Satz kann die ausdrückliche Verzichtleistung auf ein Urteil bekunden wollen. Er kann aber auch sagen wollen, es seien zum Urteil  $A$  ist  $B$  Gründe vorhanden, die Gründe genügten aber nicht, um das Urteil mit Sicherheit zu fällen. Dann ist der Satz Ausdruck eines Wirklichkeitsbewusstseins, nur eines unsicheren.")

is no objective evidence for a decision concerning *A-B*,<sup>1</sup> is based on a knowledge of the conditions expressed in the judgment—that is, on objective evidence—in precisely the same way as the judgment '*A is B*' or '*That A is B is false*.' The problematic judgment is not, therefore, a decision dictated by volition and feeling, but in James's sense is a true theoretical judgment.

James could misunderstand these simple facts and believe the problematic judgment to be a passional decision because he confused the problematic judgment with what he calls the skeptical judgment, which according to him may be paraphrased: We should not decide when there is no objective evidence, for a theoretical decision alone is justified. Only if the problematic judgment be so conceived can we understand what James means when he calls the problematic judgment '*a decision in favor of skepticism*,' but as we now know that the problematic judgment asserts nothing concerning the relative justification of the theoretical and practical attitudes, we know that it can express no comparison at all, but is merely an assertion of the non-existence of objective evidence for the decision of a given opinion. By implication this is an assertion of the incapacity of the mind to pronounce a theoretical decision on this option and gives rise to the attitude of leaving the question open. But a decision that the theoretical judgment based on evidence is the only justifiable form of judgment, is a further statement, with which the problematic judgment itself is not concerned.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The burden of truth that an option should not be treated as an open question when it has been established that there is no evidence for deciding it, but should be settled by a passional affirmation or denial, is thus thrown on him who contests the propriety of pronouncing theoretical judgments only. This defense of the problematic judgment, if successful, also lays bare the inaccuracy of the term '*forced option*.' There are no forced options within the sphere of thought as there are within the sphere of action. If thinking is inquiry and does not result in conclusions—in '*yes*' or '*no*'—there is always the possibility of doubting, that is, of continuing to inquire. In James's example, '*accept this truth or go without it*,' this state of affairs is obscured by the illicit use of the word '*truth*,' for as soon as a statement evidences itself as a truth it becomes unnecessary to urge it on any one, and there is then but *one* alternative for the judger who wants the truth. If we change the word truth to '*statement*,' which it stands for, the third possible attitude immediately discloses itself; accept, or go without the implications of the statement, or inquire further into the statement, in order to determine its truth. The problematic judgment is the judgment which states that further evidence is necessary in order to determine the truth. The assumption upon which the validity of this argument bases, is, of course, the '*will for truth*' in him who judges, and not the will for action; thus in cases where belief or judgment is said to create its own reality and thus its own validity, the nature of the decision is immaterial from the logical point of view, as any decision whatsoever verifies itself.

A passional decision in favor of the religious hypothesis can then no longer be defended on the grounds that even if we suspend negative or affirmative judgment, we are pronouncing a passional decision and running as much risk of losing the truth. If James wishes to prove that free or passional affirmation has the same justification as the problematic attitude, he must first prove that free, passional or practical affirmation has the same validity for knowledge as the judgment based on objective or coercive evidence. That he has failed to prove this, the preceding chapters of our critique have tried to show.

In connection with the narrower problem with which we are dealing, namely, the justification of the assumption of the freedom of will and belief, these facts point to the following conclusions: The justification of freedom which is based on the fact that because we can come to no theoretical decision about freedom we must in any case—even if we decide to suspend judgment—judge passional, falls to the ground. Some other justification for a passional decision in the question of freedom is called for.

A second argument for the justification of the belief in freedom, similar to if not identical with that used in the defense of religious belief,<sup>1</sup> is contained in James's assertion that freedom, if a fact, could never be known as such if it were not freely adopted or believed. The significant point here is that both arguments are based on the theory that belief is free; for does James not say: You are justified in believing in 'free' belief for a number of reasons. First of all, you may 'freely' choose to believe—though not intellectually coerced—because you can not come to a theoretical decision. Secondly, you may choose to believe 'freely' because you are logically forced to 'freely' adopt this belief, if you wish to know whether you can 'freely' adopt beliefs. In other words, believe 'freely' if you wish to know whether you can believe 'freely.'

We have before us a circle which vitiates the entire argument we have been considering. For freedom of will and of belief can, according to this circular theory, be assumed or believed only if one can freely choose to believe: the very point in question. If, with James, we are to hold will and belief to be the same mental attitude, his justification of freedom reads: You are free, because you may freely choose to be free. The proof of freedom is, in James's own words, dependent on a 'free' passional decision for freedom: freedom is its own supposition, and accordingly has itself for a condition of

<sup>2</sup> Because here belief is a factor necessary to the *cognition* of freedom, whereas in the case of the religious hypothesis belief was necessary to its reality.

its existence. The real question, 'Am I really free from the beginning; can I freely choose to believe in freedom?' James answers by saying, 'Freedom's first deed should be to affirm itself.' He here-with uses an argument which has as much validity as the one a man might employ in defending determinism by saying, 'You are pre-determined to doubt or deny determinism, therefore determinism is a universal fact.' In both cases the question is evaded by being tacitly presupposed.<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental error of this whole train of thought seems to lie in the fact that James has established no real relation between the concepts of psychology, science in general, epistemology in particular, and the living reality as it is given in pure experience. For to him the belief in freedom and religion is, after all, negatively dependent on the existence of scientific proof; only if science does not reject an hypothesis is its passional affirmation justified. And, again, postulates can be freely believed, realized and made true, only by means of action, and so the whole process is transferred from the sphere of knowledge into that of life.

Our final results may be summed up: Free belief or the will to believe, which was to serve as the foundation of the defense of religious faith from two points of view, first, in that all knowledge was held to be free belief, and secondly, in that the religious hypothesis was said to be dependent upon a belief in it—this free belief has proved a concept which is not suited to serve as a foundation for either one of these assertions. Not only is the will to believe materially inadequate as a basis for James's defense of religious faith, but it has been found that from a formal point of view it transfers the argument used for the defense into a vicious circle, inasmuch as it is a postulate in need of the same proof as the postulate it is intended to support. In other words, it is its own presupposition.

<sup>1</sup> There is another tender spot in this argument for freedom, to which attention must be drawn. In the eyes of one who believes that something definite may well be theoretically stated about the problem of freedom, the whole argument falls to the ground. In asserting that 'the most a defender of freedom can do is to prove that the evidence for determinism is not coercive,' James admits that if the determinist can show determinism to be a scientifically grounded theory, he invalidates the argument for freedom.

## CONCLUSION

IN the introduction to this work we defined our task as a critique of James's doctrine calculated to lead to the evaluation of his work in its character as a contribution to the voluntaristic explanation of the world, and to a determination of his relation to the other representatives of this voluntaristic movement in philosophy.

The preceding critique has presented the essential points for an answer to these questions; the isolated points made there shall here be summarized and supplemented. The essential point we have tried to make in our criticism was the proof of James's absolute subjectivism. The individual aspects of this subjectivism we have become acquainted with in detail; we shall now consider how this subjectivism differentiates James's voluntarism from other forms of voluntarism, and how unfitted his doctrine is to contribute a scientific-philosophical explanation of the world.

Paulsen, as well as Miller, brings James into line with Kant and Fichte. Is this historical classification admissible? In Chapter III. we saw how Fichte, interpreting Kant, endeavored to bridge the chasm between knowledge and faith by demonstrating the primacy of the practical reason or the will even for the case of the truth-seeking and judging mind. The universal necessity and validity of knowledge were based on the universal necessity and validity of the practical will that manifests itself in the conscience. In James's case, too, knowledge was reduced to faith or free belief, but no principle of certitude was found for faith. In order to present this contrast more fully, it may be well to compare James's doctrine as a whole with those of contemporary philosophers in harmony with Fichte in all essential points. Sigwart, Windelband and Rickert are here to be considered.

Like Fichte, Rickert seeks to ground his voluntarism on the primacy of the practical will in the theoretical sphere. He tries to prove that the recognition of one's obligation toward the truth-value and subordination under it, is the logical presupposition of all judgment and, therefore, of all knowledge.<sup>1</sup> From this point of view it follows that logical thought in general is based on a will for truth and that the logical presuppositions of science in particular are valid because they are 'universally and necessarily willed.' Now these latter views are defended by James as well. But we know that

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 65 ff.



James conceives the postulates of natural science and of scientific thought in general to be 'freely' adopted—that is, voluntarily chosen—postulates, which the individual can and may reject, and which, because unproved, have no 'coercive' certitude. If we remember that, according to James, the lawfulness of nature, nay, even truth itself and our power to possess truth, are all postulates in the sense above, the absolute subjectivism of his standpoint fully manifests itself. That Rickert does not hold the presuppositions of science to be dependent on volitional choice and arbitrary passionial decisions of the individual, must be clear from the sketch of his standpoint given above. His fundamental thought was the theory that the proof of the priority of the practical element in the sphere of knowledge might and must confer *objectivity* on knowledge. From the same source the presuppositions of science gain objectivity: they are valid because they are the inevitable means to the end and aim of science; and the will for science, again, is objective, because it is 'a necessary recognition of absolutely valid over-empirical values'; science itself being the most perfect substitute for that perceptive knowledge of the world ever beyond the reach of the finite mind.

This is not the place to enter into Rickert's doctrine in detail.<sup>1</sup> Our only purpose was to point out the difference between his and James's conception of the 'over-empirical' and undemonstrable presuppositions of natural science. For James they are assumptions which the individual may adopt or reject, as appears proper to his practical rationality feeling; Rickert, on the other hand, seeks to give a teleological foundation for the objectivity of the laws of nature, which 'shall make the validity of these laws independent of any merely arbitrary recognition, to which the consistent empiricist must confine himself.' His foundation "leaves untouched the convictions of empirical science, but reinterprets the epistemological conception of scientific activity in such a manner as to transform the concepts of a reality totally divorced from the cognizing subject, into the concept of a recognition of an over-individual value necessary for every cognizing subject. In short, it is not a 'reality,' but a sense of 'obligation,' which must direct knowledge, and which forms the objective of the knowledge of natural law as it does of all knowledge."<sup>2</sup> So much for James's subjectivism in his conception of natural science.

<sup>1</sup> I can not enter into this theory more fully. It is both too profound and too intricate to permit of more than a suggestion in so brief a notice. See 'Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung,' S. 673; especially Chapter V., Parts 4 and 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 681.



As for James's apparent agreement with Sigwart, this appearance, too, rests on a misunderstanding. Sigwart defines logical thought, in contrast to voluntary thought, as a process which has for its end and aim necessary and valid knowledge, and for its motive and basis the will for truth. Truth is recognized as the aim of thought, when thought proceeds in a logical manner; that is, when we judge. But that nothing is more remote from Sigwart's intentions than the assertion that the individual may choose whether or not there shall be truth, is definitely proved by his denial of any relation between truth and the practical volitions of individuals, which is made in the following words: "Truth and falsehood are as independent of our feeling and of our will as are beauty and goodness."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Sigwart conceives judgment to apply to the validity of a proposition and yet to be a theoretical and not a practical attitude, and this implies, of course, that he regards truth as a relation between the mind and the object, which is not *established* by the former, but only *confirmed* by it. "We reject error because it is false; it is not false because we reject it; the theoretical insight into the truth or falsity of a proposition precedes and gives rise to the feeling, just as the recognition of the purposiveness of a judgment must precede its choice."<sup>2</sup> If Sigwart then does not acknowledge that judgment, though directed by the recognition of truth, contains a practical element, he can hardly be understood to regard the recognition of truth itself as a decision of the will. On the contrary, his will for truth is a will to know the truth, and has no similitude with James's will to believe that there is a truth.

Accordingly, James's will for truth is nearer to the conceptions of Windelband and Rickert, who hold that knowledge presupposes truth as an absolute value, and that the practical will posits values, or evaluates; in short, they hold truth as a value to be dependent on the will. As was shown, the difference between their standpoint and that of James lies in that, for them, the practical evaluating will is the over-individual will because the truth value is necessary and valid for theoretical activity. In James's case, on the contrary, the will which chooses to recognize truth and rationality is the individual will, and the choice is nothing less than inevitable and necessary.

Here, in fine, we reach the very kernel of James's doctrine. In

<sup>1</sup> 'Logik,' Vol. I., foot-note to p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159. It must be admitted that the point of view here developed, with a view to combating Windelband's conception of judgment as a practical attitude, is difficult to harmonize with that expressed by Sigwart in 'Logik,' Vol. II., Introduction.

his essay 'The Will to Believe' he tells us that he considers himself an empiricist for the reason that, although he decides in favor of the postulates that 'there is truth, and that it is the destiny of our minds to attain it,' he rejects the absolutist view that we can *know when* we have attained to knowing truth. "To *know* is one thing, and to know for certain *that* we know is another." Objective evidence and certitude are fine ideals, but where on this "moonlit and dream-visited planet are they found?" There is but one certain fact, and it is the fact that the present phenomena of consciousness exist; but this is not knowledge, only its starting-point.

Before saying the final word in evaluation of this standpoint, light must be thrown on a certain unclearness in its formulation. In what does the distinction consist which James draws between the skeptic who denies truth itself, as well as man's power to attain it, and the empiricist who holds to the existence of truth and our power to attain it, but denies that we can ever know when we have attained it? Is there a real distinction between these two standpoints? Are the three judgments here expressed, the one concerning the existence of truth, the second concerning the knowledge of truth, and the third concerning our knowledge of the knowledge of truth—are these three judgments logically distinct?

Given certain conditions, a logical distinction of this sort can, indeed, be carried out, and when we have determined the nature of these conditions, we need only to determine whether the conception of truth fulfills these conditions in order to test the distinction made by James. It is conceivable, for instance, that on the supposition that our ideas copy and represent an independent world of things, three attitudes toward this world might be assumed and the three judgments in question passed. First, we might simply affirm the world, and either say nothing of our power to know it, or else deny it. (This is approximately the thing-in-itself standpoint.) In the second place, we might believe that our ideas actually represented or reproduced this world: that we are capable of knowing it. In the third place, it is conceivable that one might take the standpoint that, although a portion of our ideas represented the independent world, we could never tell with certainty, never really know, which ideas did so. But it must be evident that for this conceptual differentiation we needed to posit an objective world of things completely independent of thought. Only under these conditions could the object of knowledge exist without being known or knowable, and only so can it be potentially knowable without being actually known.

As soon as we realize, however, that 'truth,' no matter how it be

thought of, can never be conceived as something independent of knowledge, but on the contrary has meaning only in connection with knowledge, it becomes clear that the conditions under which the three attitudes toward the knowledge of the thing were possible, are not fulfilled. The three standpoints distinguished resolve themselves into two, as may be shown by the example used above.

If, as in standpoint one, I admit that there is reality, but suspend judgment concerning my ability to know it, and if by truth I understand that thought which corresponds with reality—then obviously I have declined to judge whether truth exists. As soon as I adopt the second attitude, however, and hold that we are able to attain to a knowledge of reality, I hold and recognize the possibility of truth: I hold that truth exists. The so-called third judgment, that although reality is known (truth exists), I can never know when I know, can mean nothing else in regard to truth than that I can never attain it. No other attitude is possible toward the existence of truth, as soon as we realize that truth is not an independent reality, but a quality of our judgments, of knowledge. Truth can refer only to judgments, and to concepts so far as they are the results of judgments; those which are universally valid are true. If we hold, then, that there is truth, we can mean nothing else than that there are judgments of universal validity; if we go farther and assert that we are able to attain to truth, we assert that we are able to cast valid judgments. The further modification, that we can never know whether we have attained truth, is simply nonsensical, for I can not assert that although I pass judgments of universal validity I do not know whether they have universal validity. Judgments do not affirm a special truth, but, in conforming to certain conditions, they themselves are true. If, then, James denies that we are able to pass absolutely valid and certain judgments, his standpoint is identical with that of a skeptic who denies our ability to attain to truth, and it needs no other refutation than skepticism receives.<sup>1</sup>

If we ask ourselves why James's voluntarism threw him into the quagmire of extreme subjectivism, the answer is that it lies in the peculiar foundation he gives to his voluntarism. In Chapter III. we presented Paulsen's relation to James at length; we wish to call attention to two points made there. It was shown how Paulsen declared himself in agreement with Kant, inasmuch as he, too, held religious faith to be valid because necessary to guarantee success to the will for good. This doctrine was shown to be rooted in a dualistic or two-world standpoint: religious faith as valid from the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 48.

point of view of action only, and knowledge from the point of view of thought. From this practical imperative as a point of departure, Fichte's doctrine set in, proclaiming the imperative obligatory for theoretical activity as well, and it is this standpoint which is receiving further development in that branch of voluntarism represented by Windelband, Rickert and others. But Paulsen, too, was not satisfied with the form the original Kantian standpoint took, and suggested, as we know, its completion, or restoration, rather, in the form of a substructure for the primacy of the practical will; this substructure to be gained from biological and psychological material. We saw how he then suggested one or two special theories which might be utilized for this purpose, and we saw further that what Paulsen suggested, James carried out.

The utilization of natural science, and especially of psychological theories, is, then, characteristic of James's foundation of voluntarism. The system constructed on such a foundation was bound to become a voluntaristic psychology, which, when expanded into a *Weltanschauung*, led inevitably to subjectivism, and through it, implicitly, at least, to skepticism.

Concerning this voluntaristic psychology itself, a few words may be added. Our critique has made it sufficiently clear that James's theory of belief is full of incompatibilities and contradictions, and that it could not be held to have established the identification of will and belief. This, however, is in itself no proof against the principle or conception of a voluntaristic psychology. Nevertheless a voluntaristic psychology, attempting to reduce all psychical processes and states to processes and states of will—conceived as active spontaneity—may very well be held to be fallacious in principle. It depends, to be sure, on one's conception of psychology as a science. According to Miller's view of the matter, James's merit lies precisely in the fact that he represents modern psychology, which no longer describes the 'laws and elements of the mind . . . in chill, mechanical terms, from which the vital heat of conscious life has long escaped.' In James he sees the genial mind, able to give life and warmth to psychological work, and endowed with a special sense for the 'differential, unique, irreducible.' "Here is the very romanticist in psychology," says Miller, "keen to trace the scarlet thread in the tissue of things, his back turned upon the theories that seem to make of mind a mere passive flow and association of lifeless ideas—the pallid theories of the eighteenth century. Here is the predestined interpreter of the rich variety, the 'warmth and intimacy' of consciousness. . . . In the hands of this author,

psychology becomes in no mocking or unmeaning sense the science of the soul."<sup>1</sup>

No one even superficially acquainted with James's work will incline to think that Miller has exaggerated James's genius for grasping and interpreting the active life of the soul. On these points, and also on that of the literary quality of his presentation, no over-estimation is possible. And yet one may very well doubt whether an interpretation and description of the real experience of the soul be the task of psychology. Indeed, if one conceives the essential purpose of science to be the transformation of reality as it is given in immediate experience in the interest of its simplification and causal explanation, and if one conceives psychology to be a science, it is not easy to see how anything of scientific value can be reached by a genius for grasping and describing the 'differential, unique and irreducible' in consciousness. It is precisely the relating of the differential, the classification of the unique and the reduction of the irreducible which constitute the end and aim of science. Certainly, the scientific transformation of experience has for its pre-supposition the mastery of its material, in our case the experience of the soul. That James is a master in this field, and a master in communicating to others his own broad point of view, every student of psychology will gratefully acknowledge.

A last word in evaluating the presented and criticized doctrine: As an appeal to the individual as a moral being, this doctrine is surely of importance. In a certain sense it claims to be a sermon, and as a sermon, owing to its fullness of suggestion and of wisdom, it is of irresistible charm. But we set ourselves not the task of writing an appreciation of its qualities as a personal *argumentum ad populum*, but rather that of examining whether the intellect could accept this defense of religious faith. In other words, our task was to pass judgment concerning the *truth* of James's defense of religion.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the essay cited above.







# THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

## PSYCHOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS

There is no similar journal in the field of scientific philosophy. It is identified with no philosophical tradition and stands preeminently for the correlation of philosophy with the problems and experience of the present.

The contents of recent numbers include :

The Doctrine of the Eject. GEORGE STUART FULLERTON.

Individual and Social Ethics. A. C. ARMSTRONG.

On the Function of Visual Images. EDWARD L. THORNDIKE.

The Absolute and the Strenuous Life. WILLIAM JAMES.

Concrete Conceptual Synthesis. PERCY HUGHES.

The Physiological Argument against Realism. EVANDER  
BRADLEY MCGILVARY.

The Attack on Distinctions. GIOVANNI VAILATI.

The Control of Ideas by Facts. JOHN DEWEY.

Contemporary Realism and the Problems of Perception. W.  
P. MONTAGUE.

The Pragmatic Value of the Absolute. WILLIAM ADAMS  
BROWN.

Psychology : What is It about? MARY WHITON CALKINS.

The Thirteen Pragmatisms. ARTHUR O. LOVEJOY.

Sub Specie Æternitatis. WENDELL T. BUSH.

Logic and Educational Theory. SIDNEY EDWARD LANG.

Consciousness and Reality. JOHN E. BOODIN.

*Published on alternate Thursdays*

**Sub-Station 84, New York City**

**\$3 per Annum, 26 Numbers**

**15 Cents per Copy**









